Christ and the Church

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CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

SERMONS

ON

THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION.

(MATT. XXVIII. 18-20.)

BY

ADOLPH SAPHIR,

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"CHRIST CRUCIFIED," ETC.

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PREFACE.

The last words of our Lord, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, contain a brief summary of Christian doctrine—a concise but majestic statement of *Church-truth*, of the blessings of the new covenant.

In the following Sermons, delivered before a newly-gathered congregation, I have endeavoured to unfold to some slight extent the rich treasure of instruction and consolation contained in the apostolic commission, in the earnest hope that our beginning may be in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, and that as a Church we may hold fast the truth and joy of our Lord. The central position of Christ, whom the Father hath exalted "Head over all things

to the Church "—the paramount importance of the Scripture and of the ministry of the Word—the perfect revelation of God in the new covenant as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the new obedience of the gospel, as distinguished from the dispensation of law—the relation of the Church to the world, as well as her character, organisation, and mission to those around her and to the heathen—the real presence of Immanuel, such are the topics which the words of the Saviour set before us.

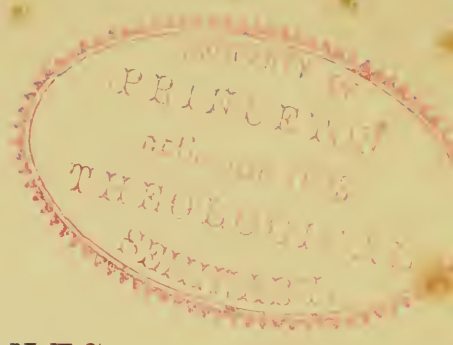
I have endeavoured in my exposition to teach according to Scripture, and the proportion of faith. My special desire was to encourage and confirm young believers, that they may diligently and faithfully search the Word of God, so as to be fortified against the errors of the day; that, avoiding the false churchism, and the pseudo-spiritual individualism, which always appear at the same time, they may devote their lives to the service of Christ in the Church, and that they may learn to live in the world, and yet to be crucified to it, to honour

and love all that the Father has created for Christ, giving thanks continually, and overcoming the wicked one.

I commend this book, with its many faults and imperfections, to the blessing of God and the kindness of my readers. May we know Immanuel. He who died for us is with us, and He who is with us will soon come.

A. S.

March 1874.



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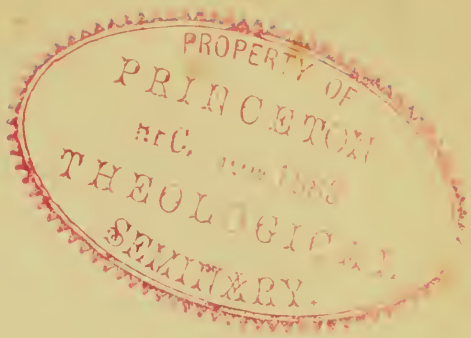
I.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

"THEN THE ELEVEN DISCIPLES WENT AWAY INTO GALILEE, INTO A MOUNTAIN WHERE JESUS HAD APPOINTED THEM. AND WHEN THEY SAW HIM, THEY WORSHIPPED HIM: BUT SOME DOUBTED. AND JESUS CAME AND SPAKE UNTO THEM, SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST; TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. AMEN."—MATT. XXVIII. 16–20.



SERMON I.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—
MATT. xxviii. 18.

NONE but Jesus could have uttered these words, and Jesus only after His death and resurrection. It is true that in the days of His humiliation He had said, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father" (Matt. xi. 27); and again, that "the Father had given Him power over all flesh" (John xvii. 2). It is true, that during the years of His obedience on earth He lived in the full consciousness of the glory which He had before the world was, and knew that the Father had given all things into His hands (John xiii. 3). But it was only after He had accomplished His decease at Jerusalem that by His resurrection He was declared

(Rom. i. 4) to be the Son of God with power. It was after His death on the cross that the Father highly exalted Him, and that, as the Son of man, He was invested with the omnipotent government of the whole world.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Thus spake our risen Lord, the man Christ Jesus, the only Mediator between God and man, our royal High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him (Heb. viii. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 22). Thus spake the incarnate Son of God, the appointed Heir of all things, crowned with glory after His obedience unto death. Thus spake He *on earth* before His ascension, to announce His spiritual presence and reign, during the times of His bodily absence; to announce His royal prerogative on earth until the times of the restitution of all things (Acts iii. 21), when He shall establish His kingdom, and rule visibly over the nations. (Comp. Dan. vii. 13 and 14);

His words are full of divine mystery; they possess heavenly massiveness and grandeur, and

yet are they full of peace, consolation, and hope to every Christ-loving heart. The Lord announces His omnipotence ; but when He says, "All power is given unto me," He reminds us that His power is the gift and reward of His Father after His obedience and death of love. He speaks in the tone of absolute sovereignty and authority, as Jehovah commanded Israel to observe all His precepts and statutes (Deuteronomy *passim*); but listening to the command and promise of the risen Saviour, we feel that His yoke is easy and His burden light, and that in the revelation of the triune Name, He gives all-sufficient strength for service and victory. And when finally He assures us of His omnipresence, how blessed is the promise of His nearness all the days and among all nations ! We are revived by the same fragrance, which in His name Immanuel is our delight and encouragement.

With peaceful joy we listen to the words of our Divine Lord.

The words are majestic and gracious, they are also comprehensive in their simplicity and brevity. Here is the mystery of the mediatorial

kingdom — Christ, the God-man,* Lord of heaven and earth to the glory of the Father. Here is a summary of divine revelation and Christian truth — The name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Here is the description of Christian life and service — Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Here learn the character, history, and mission of the Church — To evangelise all nations, and to build up the faithful in the knowledge and obedience of God. And here is the hope and prospect of Christ's people — The Master's presence with us until the end of the world, and His return to fulfil all things.

So brief and weighty is the style of the heavenly Sanctuary, so much and so great things has Christ expressed in few words, that we and our children may remember them easily, and repeat them frequently, and meditate on them with grateful hearts.

* This expression does not occur in Scripture ; yet, as Stier remarks, is almost literally contained in this passage, as well as in Col. ii. 9.

† "Until the end of the world,"—I shall be with you always *till* that time, and shall never be absent from you *after* it.—*Greg. Naz.*

It is true of this Scripture what Martin Luther said, that in the Bible every flower is a garden, and every tree a forest.

All the commandments and promises of Christ have their root and source in His adorable Person. He gives what He commands; He is what He gives; giving Himself, He bestows all blessings. Hence in all His epistles to the Churches, He first reveals Himself, and the manifestation of His Person is the foundation on which His commands and counsels rest, as well as the fountain from which strength and renewal flow (Rev. ii., iii.) Thus here also the Lord first reveals Himself as possessing all power in heaven and earth.

It is as the risen Saviour that Jesus speaks.

I love to think of that mysterious moment, very early in the morning, when the Father raised up His holy child Jesus from the grave. No human eye witnessed it. Again the blessed feet of Jesus touched His blood-redeemed earth, and He went forth to appear unto His brethren, and to declare unto them anew the name of the Father. Perfect was His peace, unspeakable the calmness of His repose, infinite His joy, in-

vincible His strength, triumphant His thanksgiving. His was a new blessedness; for ended are now the fears, the sorrows, the sufferings of David, the son of Jesse; henceforth He will only sing the praise of God in the midst of the Church (Ps. xxii. 22). The yesterday of His humiliation and the cross is past; the steep ascent on the rugged path of obedience is finished; His conflict with the powers of darkness is ended; that small moment—infinite in its depth of agony, and longer than all thousands of years—that small moment when the Father hid from Him His countenance, it is past. Christ descended into the lowest depth, and the light of His love to God and man came forth only with greater brilliancy and sweeter radiancy. He saved the lost sheep; He tasted the bitterness of death; He bound the jailer hand and foot; He triumphed over principalities and powers. All is finished, all is gained. Sin and death, the grave and hell, lie behind Him. He died unto sin once; He liveth now unto God for evermore. The Father is glorified, the Church is purchased; earth is redeemed, even heaven is transfigured—

and He Himself is exalted, the Head, the Heir of all things.

This is, indeed, not merely the first day of the week, but the first day of the world; for beautiful as was the light of the first creation, beautiful as was the light in which the first Adam, created in the Divine image, beheld the glory of God, and worshipped in love and humility, its duration was brief, and soon it was succeeded by the night of sin, sorrow, and death. But the day which began on the Resurrection morn is endless, and its light is eternal and invincible. Our Sun of Righteousness can never set. He is Light of light, and God of God. Out of the night of weeping, into which the Holy One entered in His infinite and free love, is born a joy of morning which can never end. Have you not heard, have you not joined, the Apostle's hymn—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away!" The true light now shineth; the

darkness is past. We have entered on the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it.

During forty days Christ appeared unto His disciples. He revealed Himself unto them, the same Jesus who was crucified, full of grace and truth, love and sympathy, power and majesty. As true man He spake, He reasoned, He opened to them the Scriptures (Luke xxvii. 27); they touched His sacred body (John xx. 27); He ate with them (Luke xxvii. 43). But while they beheld His true humanity, they also beheld the glory of the only-begotten of the Father; they learned to call Him Lord and God with deeper humility and awe (John xx. 28); they adored Him as the Son of God (John xx. 19), the Prince of peace (John xx. 17), the Shepherd of the flock (John xxi. 16).

Jesus taught them the mystery of the cross and the glory. He prepared them for the descent of the Holy Ghost, and for the intermediate period of testimony and suffering before His second coming.

We do not sufficiently enter into the sorrow of the disciples. They had lost Christ accord-

ing to the flesh. The human friendship which existed between the Lord Jesus and them—the earthly sweetness of this relationship—was gone for ever. The days of human companionship, bright and fragrant as childhood, were over. That sharp sword which pierced the heart of Mary, when on the cross she lost Jesus as her Child, went through the disciples' souls likewise. As He said to Mary Magdalene, so He said to them *all*, "Touch me not." Henceforth they were to know Christ no longer according to the flesh. But they were to know Him more truly and fully; they were to enter into more real fellowship with the Lord of Glory, the risen and glorified Head of the Church, the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17), and in that fellowship to realise that His love and tenderness had remained as deep and sweet as in the days of His earthly ministry.

The forty days after His resurrection were the gentle transition, during which the blessed Master, in His infinite wisdom and grace, prepared the disciples for the future, with its new light and spiritual power.

He did not dwell with them, but He appeared

unto them. The high priest and the rulers of Jerusalem could take no cognisance of these meetings between the risen Lord and His disciples. To them He was dead; He was non-existent. "The world seeth me no more." Symbolic fact! Jesus still meets His believing disciples. There is a congregation with which no earthly jurisdiction can interfere, and which no earthly philosophy can discover. Jesus still teaches, blesses, guides, and rules His servants; but the world seeth Him no more, because it cannot receive the Spirit of Truth. The world knows not the Father (John xvii. 27); nor the Son (1 John iii. 2); nor the Spirit (John xiv. 17, 22).

A new life began to dawn in the hearts of the disciples. Old things had passed away. The mists of darkness and doubt were disappearing. They began to understand the Scriptures. They beheld the glory of Christ. Their hearts were established. Waiting for fuller light and greater power, looking forward to Pentecost, they carried about with them in this mysterious interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension a wonderful and blessed

secret; they possessed a knowledge, a peace and a dignity, of which the world had no conception. The secret was—Jesus lives! the peace—He is our Lord; the dignity—He calls us His brethren, and His God and Father is our God and Father. And yet even this was only a preparation for the full manifestation of the mystery—the union of Christ and the Church, which is His body.

Five hundred disciples were thus linked together, and formed a fraternity such as earth had never beheld before. The knowledge of Jesus, the risen Saviour, separated them from the world, and bound them one to another in strong and tender fellowship. They knew and followed the Lord of Glory, whom the princes of this world rejected. The centre of their circle, the magnet which attracted their hearts, the source of their new life and hope, was the blessed Master, in whom they had believed in the days of His flesh, whom their faith had well-nigh lost during the awful hours of His sufferings and death; but who had, according to His promise, returned to them, to be theirs for evermore. They belonged now to Him in a

fuller and more exclusive sense. His death had separated them also from the world, from the flesh, from the hopes and thoughts of the first Adam. A Man rejected by Israel, and crucified by Jews and Gentiles, but acknowledged and exalted by the Father, was their Lord and King. In Him was their life; hence it was the life of resurrection. They expected from Him all guidance and command, all blessings and gifts, all promises and rewards; it was therefore in an other-worldly, heavenly region that henceforth they were to move. Christ was risen, and they were risen with Him. The corn of wheat had died, and now it is no longer alone; the second Adam is the quickening Spirit; the Son of God, risen from the dead, becomes the Firstborn of many brethren.

They did not know as yet the mystery of the Church. The Holy Ghost had not yet descended, and the marvellous secret, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, had not yet been disclosed to them. Only dimly could they as yet understand the mystical union between Christ, the risen Head, and the Church, which is His body.

But though their understanding was not yet fully enlightened, and the day of Pentecost not yet fulfilled,—in true and vital faith, in heaven-born and lively hope, in fervent, solemn, adoring love, they belonged to Jesus. The Lord had appointed them a mountain in Galilee where He would meet them. He had spoken of this before His death, and the angels recalled it to the memory of the disciples after Christ's resurrection. Thus, according to the Master's word, the disciples met, led by the eleven apostles, chosen by the Lord as the elder brethren and guides of the future Church. No stranger, no enemy, no unbeliever, can disturb them or intrude into this hallowed circle. Was it that the angels of God encamped round about them, and that the Father thus surrounded them with bright and strong, but unseen walls and gates? Or was it that the glory of the risen Saviour insulated them, according to a spiritual law, from all whose hearts had not yet been touched by divine grace?

He appeared, and they worshipped. Some among them doubted; for the heart of man is slow to believe. But the Lord, like Joseph to

his astonished brethren, went near, and then declared His divine majesty and infinite power.*

"All power is given unto Him in heaven and earth." Once, in the days of His flesh, He was taken up into an exceeding high mountain, and all the kingdoms of the world were shown unto Him, and the glory of them. And the tempter said, "All these things will I give unto Thee." But Jesus, the holy Child of God, meek and lowly in heart, in the spirit of obedience said, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is

* The following remarks on the passage are from Andrews' "Life of Our Lord:"—"This meeting, having been appointed by the Lord before His death, and recalled to the memory of the disciples by the angels, must be looked upon as the chiefest and most significant of all His manifestations. There can be little doubt that it was identical with that mentioned by Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 6—'After that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.' Although Matthew speaks only of the eleven disciples as present at the mountain, yet his silence respecting others would not exclude them, as in his introduction to the Sermon on the Mount he speaks only of the disciples as His auditors, although great multitudes beside were present. That he should mention only the eleven is wholly consistent with his general purpose, and with the peculiarities of his Gospel. But in his own brief account there is a hint that others were there beside the eleven. . . . Upon this occasion, the words seem to have been spoken which are recorded by Matthew xxviii. 18-20, and Mark xvi. 15-18."

written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Given to Him by the Father. Once — only a few weeks ago—all things were taken from Him. Who was ever as poor as Jesus when He lived on earth? "Foxes have holes, and fowls of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." But what was left Him when they nailed Him to the cross? His nation rejected Him; His beloved Jerusalem cast Him out; His disciples forsook Him; they took His very garments from Him. Nothing was His but the cross and the crown of thorns. He laid down His life. And one thing He had dearer than life—that where He had garnered up His heart, His Father's love, the assurance of His favour, the light of His countenance, behold the Father withdrew from Him the sense of His love. Christ had nothing on the cross but weakness, suffering, and the burden of our sin.

And therefore it is that God hath highly exalted Him, and given unto Him all power in heaven and in earth. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, "Sit Thou at my

right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?" To whom, but to the incarnate Son Jesus, doth He say, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Angels worship Him, the Lamb of God; and in loving obedience to Him they minister unto His disciples, who shall be heirs of salvation. Jesus is God;—

> "The glorious bands
> Of golden angels sing
> Songs of adoring love to Him,
> Their Maker and their King."

The angels marvelled and rejoiced when the Word was made flesh. When God created the heavens and the earth, the angels and morning stars beheld His glory, and shouted for joy. But greater was their amazement, and deeper their rejoicing, when, on the eve of Christ's nativity, they descended from their golden bowers to the plains of Bethlehem, and sang the new song—"Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth, good-will to men."

As it is theirs to guard helpless infants and to watch at the morning gates of childhood, with what astonishment would angels, always beholding the face of God in heaven, see the reflection of His image in the child Jesus? Did they witness with awe and intense grief the subtle assault of Satan in paradise, and the fall of man, created in God's image, oh! with what unspeakable interest did they behold Jesus, tested by the adversary in the wilderness, and with what alacrity and loving zeal did they minister unto Him, and refresh His weary and exhausted humanity after His victory over the foe. And as they always saw Jesus, the Lord always beheld them. Unto Nathanael He spoke of the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. When sinners drew near unto Him, and repented, he saw the angels rejoicing over the sheep, that was lost and found. When He teaches His disciples to pray, He reminds them of the obedience and blessedness of the angels, who do the will of our Father in heaven. When He opens to His disciples the mysteries of the kingdom, He always speaks of the angels,

who will come with Him in glory, and execute His commandments and judgments. When He speaks of little children, and when He speaks of the death of Lazarus, He reveals to us the ministry of angels. In that last night, too, He beheld the legions of angels, which the Father could send Him. But He wished to be made lower than the angels; and there appeared an angel—O never-to-be-forgotten ministry!—to strengthen Him in Gethsemane. What a bond of thrilling tenderness is between Christ, the exalted Son of man, and the angels. In Christ they behold the glory of God, and through the incarnation and death of the Lord Jesus they also have been brought nearer unto the Father, and have received a deeper knowledge and a greater love.

All power is given unto Him in heaven. He, who descended, is the same that ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. (Eph. iv. 9, 10.) He is far above all principalities and powers, and might and dominion, (Eph. i. 21.) So it pleased the Father, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in

Himself. This is the revealed mystery of divine love, that the incarnate Son of God, that the crucified Jesus, should be the Lord of all; that in Him the Father's glory should be manifested, and that in Him all things should be reconciled in heaven and in earth. The Son of man is on the throne of God; He who was born of the Virgin Mary, who took upon Him the form of a servant, who by Himself purged our sins, who overcame the sharpness of death, is at the right hand of the Father.

Jesus has all power in heaven. So highly is Christ exalted, Lord of all, above principalities and powers, that the Church on earth should constantly and steadfastly look away from all that is human and temporal, and know of no other mediation, strength, guidance, and comfort, but the power and love, the wisdom and faithfulness of her one only Master and Head. He is high, to be visible and accessible to the least of His disciples in the lowliest valley of his weakness and ignorance. From His heavenly throne, and from no lower source, descends the gift of the Spirit in various manifestations; no church, whatever may be its

boasted antiquity or spirituality, is to direct the poor and needy, the dry and thirsty to herself as the dispenser of the Holy Ghost and of His gifts. On the heavenly throne, and nowhere else, is the Priest by whom we draw near and are accepted worshippers. Looking unto Him we are holy brethren, and partakers of the heavenly calling.

Behold Him, the Son of man, seated at the right hand of the Father. And in His majestic rest and peaceful dignity behold the perfect assurance of our acceptance and of our blessedness. He sat down on the right hand of God, because He had offered Himself a sacrifice for sins, because by one offering He has perfected them that are sanctified. He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, because He is the Author and Finisher of faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame. He is our Lord, our Righteousness, our Advocate with the Father. We are at Salem, in peace.

Behold Jesus in heaven, and remember that in Him divine omnipotence is united with the tender sympathy of perfect humanity. He was

made like unto His brethren in all things, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, able to succour them that are tempted; so that we can come with confidence unto the throne of grace, and pour out our hearts before Him, who is not merely our Lord, but our elder Brother.

Behold Jesus in heaven, invested with all power. His intercession is all-prevailing. The Father himself loveth us, according to the merciful assurance of Him who, as the true Mediator, always reveals and magnifies the Father, of whom are all blessings. But it is in and through Christ, and as beholding and accepting Him, that the love of the Father rests on those who believe in Jesus. And such is the glory and power of the Son, that He, according to His promise, gives whatever we ask. He has received gifts for the children of men. The blessings which He has purchased with His death are dispensed by the exalted Saviour. Our great High Priest sends down from heaven the power of His atonement, purging our consciences from dead works, and

sanctifying us unto obedience and newness of life.

Behold Jesus in heaven, and seek the things which are above. His are all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. From Him descend all healthful influences, all spiritual gifts, all quickening and renewing power, all true and everlasting consolations. The Church through all ages is filled with His fulness. The unsearchable riches of Christ, inexhaustible in their fulness, and all-glorious in their substance, are ours, that we, knowing our own poverty, and having died unto the world and all that is in it, may continually set our affections on the things which are above.

Behold Jesus in heaven, and be of good comfort. He presents unto the Father all the petitions and thanksgivings, all the labours and sufferings, all the words and works of His people, and they are accepted and well-pleasing in His sight. And while we mourn over the sins of our holy things, the coldness of our prayer, the lukewarmness of our praise, the selfishness which mingles with our service, the imperfections in motive and in execution

which characterise our works, let us remember that Jesus, as a High Priest, presents all with the incense of His intercession, and that thus our offerings ascend to the Father a sweet-smelling savour. Through Christ we present ourselves, our bodies, in which we live this earthly life, a living sacrifice unto God, which is our reasonable service.

Lift up the eyes of your heart continually to heaven. As an eminent teacher of the Church * used to say, "Jesus in heaven, the heart in heaven: Jesus in the heart, heaven in the heart."

> "God filial pleased to condescend,
> And be our all-sufficient Friend,
> And though exalted to His throne,
> The dear relation still to own,
> And send the boundless source of grace,
> The Spirit, to supply His place."†

We lift up our eyes to heaven, from whence cometh our aid. We behold the heavens open, and Jesus, who loved us to the end, appears to us, our Lord and Saviour, our omnipotent and all-merciful High Priest. In Him we behold the Father, His and ours; from Him we receive

* Bengel. † Bishop Ken.

the Holy Ghost, by whom we are grafted into the Living Vine. And as we behold the covenant-God in heaven—as in the peaceful light of the ascended Saviour we see the glory: "God is love;" so we behold all angels and principalities and powers subject unto Him. They cannot separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. They behold with adoring joy the wondrous salvation. In Christ we are brought nigh unto them also, and they minister unto us during our earthly trials and struggles. From heaven descend all our blessings—all things which pertain unto life and godliness. To heaven ascends our life, with its tears and joys, its words and works, even as in heaven is our inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away. Heaven is ours, because Jesus is ours; the First and the Last, the Living One; He who died once, and is alive for evermore (Rev. i. 18). Rejoice when you hear the risen Saviour say to you also, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

When you think of the majesty of Christ, of His power and glory, are you able to draw near

with confidence, and to trust in Him as your gracious Saviour and loving Friend?

Or, do you see Jesus as a great, golden, all-glorious Door, and yet not know how the Spirit, the Porter, openeth this gate to sinful and weak men? You see Christ's power and exaltation, Christ's perfect work, and Christ's infinite love, and yet you know not how to take hold of Him? Oh! there is a latch wherewith to open this Door. This latch is neither of gold nor silver nor precious stones. It is a great contrast to the magnificence of the Door. If you have sin, as red as scarlet—if you have guilt and unworthiness, which keeps your eyes sunk to the ground, and your conscience troubled and burdened, this is the latch wherewith to open the Door: His name is Jesus. Where sin abounded unto death, grace doth much more abound unto life eternal. Or if you feel your utter powerlessness to lift up your soul, which cleaveth to the dust, to turn away from idols to the Living God, take this latch: With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of

sins. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.

If you have sorrow which lies too deep for human ministry—if you are weary and heavy laden—if your soul is sick, and longing after health and peace—if you have tasted of the water of this life, and yet your heart is athirst—if you need a divine Physician and everlasting Consolation, behold this is the latch—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." If you are weak and afraid, because the way is narrow, the day is far spent, the enemy is strong, tribulation increasing, love waxing cold —oh! use your weakness as the latch, and come unto Him who saith, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Little children, and you young and inexperienced, make your youth the latch, and say unto Him—Thou lovest little children to come unto Thee, wilt Thou be the guide of my youth.

Behold Him! Jesus Christ, once crucified for sinners, is highly exalted, and yet a Saviour; He is the mighty God, with all power in heaven and earth. His is the omnipotence of

love and of grace—the omnipotence which can give life and strength to the bruised reed, and light and joy to the smoking flax. His is an omnipotence not to be dreaded, but to be embraced with adoring love, as it is written, "Kiss ye the Son; blessed are all they that trust in Him."

II.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF JESUS ON EARTH.

SERMON II.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF JESUS ON EARTH.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—
MATT. xxviii. 18.

FROM our earliest childhood we are taught that God is Almighty. But have we ever fixed our minds on the wonderful thought of omnipotence?

Did it ever strike you, that the thought of omnipotence *without holiness* would be appalling to the pure and spotless angels? To them the holiness of God appears as their strong and sweet safeguard, the foundation of their peace, and the only assurance of their blessedness and joy. The thought of omnipotence without holiness would be to them fearful. The thought of the perfect holiness of God, His justice and truth, enables them to rejoice in the omnipotence of God, and to rest in it with perfect security.

But the very combination which is a source of peace and confidence to the holy angels, is a source of fear and dread to fallen and guilty man. The omnipotence of a holy and just God is a thought of terror to us. Omnipotence without holiness would be unbearable to pure and spotless spirits; omnipotence and holiness *without mercy* would be crushing to sinful and polluted men.

But the thought, that all power in heaven and in earth is given unto Jesus Christ, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, is full of peace and consolation. Here we behold the divine love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, and we are not afraid. Jesus died, the just for the unjust; and He, who was offered for our transgression, is now exalted as our Lord and Advocate. Here we behold mercy and compassion, love which was stronger than death, grace which brought salvation to those who had no merit, and possessed no attraction. And here we behold—greatest of all marvels—the sympathy of a brother, and the remembrance of tears and sorrows amidst the glories of heaven. The hands which

grasp the reins of government of the whole Universe are omnipotent; but we love to think of them, once tiny and feeble hands of the infant Jesus, once used to labour and toil in humble Nazareth; used to heal the sick, and touch with gentle affection little children; once nailed for our sakes to the cross. Worthy the Lamb, thus all that is within us exclaims, to receive power and dominion for ever! O souls that have no Master, hearts that have not found their Lord, sheep without the loving Shepherd, there is a throne in heaven, and on that throne is exalted the man Christ Jesus, and unto all who come to Him He gives blessing and life eternal, grace and glory.

Jesus is invested with all power in heaven and in earth. Scripture reveals to us the grandeur and the simplicity of God's plans. There are many circles, but only one centre—Christ. There are many manifestations of the Godhead, but only one Mediator—the Son. By Him all things were created, and He is appointed the heir of all things. By Him sinners are redeemed, and the kingdom of evil is conquered; and

therefore is all power given unto Him, as the incarnate Son of God.

He is from all eternity the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. As He is the beginning of the creation of God, and as He is the end and the purpose of all things; so during all the ages He is the centre, in whom all things consist, and by whose power they are upheld. He, who was thus centre and head of creation, in whom God revealed Himself by visible manifestations in the old dispensation, became in the fulness of time man, and having purged, by Himself, our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Only the Son of God could reveal the Father, only He could save us from our sins; and it is according to the eternal counsel of God, and according to all the rights and proprieties of the heavenly Sanctuary, that to Him in human nature, and as reward of His death on the cross, should be given all power and dominion. He emptied Himself, He was made flesh; now He is crowned with glory, and He, the Lord, is that Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17.) He was obedient unto the death of the cross; *out of the*

grave, from the dead God raised Him, and set Him at His own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but that which is to come. From the lowest region of weakness, darkness, and defeat, He was raised to the highest place of power, light, and triumph. He, who gave up everything, who became absolutely poor, who was crucified, dead, and buried, hath received now, and because of His sacrifice, all things, and is Head over all to His beloved and ransomed Church.

Thus we behold the humanity of Jesus exalted and glorified. The incarnate Son of God, by His life and obedience, culminating in His expiatory sufferings and death on the cross, is now enthroned at the right hand of God, and invested with all power in heaven and in earth. The highest angel beholds and adores now the infinite and incomprehensible God in the Lord Jesus, the image of the Invisible, the manifestation of the Father, the Mediator of the new covenant, and Minister of the heavenly Sanctuary. They behold now the glory of God in the Lamb

that was slain. And in Him the counsel of God is made manifest unto them also; for they behold Him as the Head of the Church, and themselves as ministering spirits unto the heirs of salvation. The world to come, which the Father hath not put in subjection unto the angels, but unto Jesus, the Son of man, and unto the Church, which is His body, is the great consummation towards which all things tend. For one great purpose all things work together in obedience to one Will, in loving submission to one Head. In Him all creation is summed up, even as in Him and by Him all things were made and all things consist. In Him men and angels are united. Having made peace through the blood of His cross, the Father hath reconciled all things to Himself, whether they be things in earth or in heaven. Because He is from eternity the Son of God—because He is the Mediator of creation, and the upholder of all things—because He is appointed heir of all things, it was possible for Him to redeem us from our sins, and to deliver us from the power of Satan and death. According to the Father's counsel, and according to His own

infinite love, He gave Himself for us. The Son of God became the Lamb of God, that beareth the sins of the world.

Thus, according to the Father's infinite wisdom and power, the Lamb that was slain is the centre of all things, the adoration of angels, the salvation of sinners, the regeneration of the world, and the perfect and eternal manifestation of His glory. Jesus reigns, and all tongues confess that He is Lord, to the glory of the Father.

In the power and glory of Jesus in heaven is the source of our peace, strength, and joy. Let us then lift up our eyes. Man's prerogative is to look upwards to heaven. He alone from this earth lifts up his eyes, and beholds the heavens above him. Even our earthly experience teaches us that all blessings come from above. The air we breathe, the sunlight in which we live, the dew and rain which fructify the earth, are all remembrances and symbols of the truth that heavenly influences and powers are indispensable and needful to us, the children of earth. God created heaven and earth; and though sin separates them at present, the

time is coming when God's will is done in earth as it is in heaven, and when men on earth shall see and know the transfigured saints and their King Jesus, and when the angels shall be seen descending and ascending on their errands of mercy. Meanwhile the eye of faith beholds heaven very near. The great High Priest is seen by believing hearts, and the breastplate on which our names are engraven. He intercedes for us, and He sends to us all blessings we need, and strength for every duty and trial.

We think too little of the heavenly Sanctuary with its ceaseless and perfect worship, and of the bond of divine love which connects heaven and earth. Our Saviour always beheld the heavens open; He always beheld and declared the one great kingdom; He spake of the Father and Himself and the holy angels, and the salvation of sinners and the future glory; of the one great kingdom of divine manifestations of love and power. When His eye rests on little children, He sees them surrounded by angels, who behold the countenance of the Father in heaven. When He receives repent-

ant sinners, He beholds the angels rejoicing in the courts above. When He announces His return to earth, He declares that He will come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him (Matt. xxv. 31). When He promises to confess His faithful disciples on that day, He places the angels beside Himself and the Father—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when He shall come in His own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke ix. 26). It is the angels who shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just; they shall gather together the elect of God from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. So closely and inseparably is earth's history connected with heaven; so all-comprehensive is the circle of which Christ is the centre.

And this is one consequence of man's fall, that he is isolated from the heavenly world; and that his eye rests on the lower horizon, and too often is fixed on the ground, denying his heavenly origin, and forgetful of his heavenly destiny. Sin has separated man not merely from God, but also from heaven; it has intro-

duced not merely strife and discord between man and man, but it has made a rent and a chasm in that one great kingdom, in which all God's creatures were to dwell in harmony, fulfilling in their various gradations of life and power the will of God, and aiding one another in love and unity. And this is the object of redemption, to sum up together in one all things in heaven and earth, to restore the lost harmony in a new and more wonderful union through the blood of Christ, in that new joy, which angels feel over pardoned sinners, in that new righteousness and life which the incarnate Son of God gives to His brethren.

Meanwhile we are taught by Jesus to realise by faith the unseen and heavenly world. We are no longer circumscribed in our thoughts by the limits of earth and the visible. We have come to Mount Zion, and to heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. We, who live at present in the outer court, are in spirit continually looking to the Holy of Holies; we pray to our Father in heaven. In the Sanctuary above, we believe,

is the full and all-glorious revelation of the face of God in Christ Jesus. From heaven, through the mediation of angels and powers, the commandments of God are executed, and His purposes fulfilled. God the Father has united in Christ all angels and saints to form one body, in which the various members serve one another, and through their obedience and service are made partakers of the blessing, which *Love through love* brings unto all. Thus angels carry out the will of God in nature; they are agents in the history of the world, and find their highest mission in ministering unto the heirs of salvation. And hereby are they made partakers of our joy, and beholding the Church, they obtain new revelations of the divine glory. In the Church the stronger are to help the weak, enriching them in knowledge, upholding and comforting them out of the abundance of grace which God hath given them; so that by the ministry of Love, they that are exalted condescend to the low, and both they that give and they that receive are satisfied, and thanksgiving abounds unto God. The Church, again, is to give unto the world light

and love and priestly intercession, to manifest the Father's generosity, and the meekness and self-sacrifice of Christ, and thus to bring the lost and the perishing into the fold of Christ, until at last all things on earth, and even the creature, shall rejoice in the reign of humanity, and be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thus, from earth to the heavenly Sanctuary, all His works in all places of His dominion shall bless the Lord: Christ, the God-man, being the Mediator, through whom the glory of God is manifested unto angels, and the Church, and the nations, and the whole creation.

When we believe this, the world appears indeed beautiful. Heaven is near us, and in the midst of things seen and temporal we behold the things which are unseen and eternal, the real, substantial life and power, growth and action, manifestation and progress of love. We also, like Jacob, behold the hosts of angels meeting us on our journey, and like Elisha, know that fiery chariots are around us.

We believe that above the inanimate powers of nature are the living, intelligent, loving

angels who move and rule them (Ps. civ. 4, 5; John v. 4; Rev. vii. 3). These are the wheels, not unconscious, but full of wisdom and adoration; instinct with light and power, full of eyes and full of love. And these unseen, but not invisible, angels, which are around us continually, and by whose ministry and agency all nature breathes and moves, are all the messengers of Jesus. They love us, because the Son of God took upon Himself our nature. And for His sake they take charge of us, and keep us in all our ways, and shall finally carry our souls into paradise. And thus it is God's will and Christ's teaching, that when we pray, and when we think of our Father in heaven and of our Redeemer, we should remember the myriads of holy and strong angels who have never sinned, and yet are meek and lowly—who are pure and spotless, and yet shrink not from the most polluted, but rejoice over the salvation of one poor sinner—who excel in strength, and yet delight in watching over helpless infants—who have the wisdom and experience of centuries, and yet vail their faces before the Presence. Them we are to remember that we may approach

the Father and the Lord Jesus with deeper reverence and more solemn awe, that we may feel more truly the high end of our calling, to be as the bride of the Lamb, even nearer the throne, but associated with the angels in worship and service, and that the more courageously and cheerfully we should continue our service on earth, however obscure and difficult it may appear.

The thought of the angels teaches us something of the majesty of that Lord whom they continually worship and serve.* It encourages us in a fallen world, where our enemies are many, and evil seems to be strong and victorious, to think that the mighty hosts of angels are on our side, and, like fiery chariots, round about God's faithful people. It increases our watchfulness to know that we are made a spectacle to angels, and that their holy eyes are bent upon us. And it often soothes our drooping and troubled spirits to remember that, at God's command, the angels are guarding us, and

* R. Hooker, when on his deathbed, roused from silent thought, said "he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order."

ministering unto us in the midst of danger and trouble; even as an angel unbarred the gates of Peter's prison, and stood and comforted Cornelius.

Such blessings will be ours when we think of the angels, that family

> "Of wondrous beings, who, ere the world was made,
> Millions of ages back, have stood around
> The throne of God; they never have known sin,
> But through those cycles all but infinite
> Have led a strong and pure celestial life,
> And bore to gaze on th' unveiled face of God,
> And drank from the eternal Fount of truth,
> And served Him with a keen, ecstatic love."

And thus shall we also learn to form a sober and just estimate of men and earthly things. Remember the Lord Jesus Christ. What were to Him the power of Herod and Pilate, the wisdom of the scribes, the spiritual dignity and influence of Pharisees and priests, the applause and enthusiasm of the multitude? He, beholding the Father and the angels and the heavenly realities, both present and to come, allowed Pharisees to murmur and accuse Him of blasphemy, rulers and princes to despise and judge Him, the people to turn away from Him and His kingdom of the cross; He received

sinners, and ate with them; He chose the humble fishermen, and trained them; He exalted little children as the model citizens of the heavenly kingdom; He laid aside what is strong and wise, and good and powerful in the sight of men, that which is earthly, and of man, as being utterly useless for His purpose, for heavenly life and glory, choosing things which are weak, yea, things which are not, to make them a new creation, which liveth for evermore. Thus during His life on earth was He always in heaven; and now from His throne of glory He exerts divine power throughout all the dominions of God—Divine, and therefore not recognised by the world.

Jesus has all power in heaven, and therefore, also, all power in earth. At present, only believers know this; at Christ's second coming all the world shall acknowledge it. Men fancy that Jesus has only spiritual power and influence, that He is Head and Lord of ministers and evangelists and devout disciples, and do not know that He is Lord of all, that the Father hath delivered unto Him all things, that by Him princes reign, and kings rule, and

philosophers think and discover—that He is the life and light, and strength and beauty of all that is living and true, and strong and beautiful—that by Him all things consist. They do not know that Christ is the Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come; that the whole world and its history have but one centre and one purpose; that in Him are fulfilled all the counsels and ways of God. At present He, whom God hath highly exalted, who is the Lord of Glory, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, who is Head over all things to the Church, and under whose feet the Father hath put all things, rules and governs in silent and calm omnipotence, unknown and unrecognised by the world. All earthly events and historical movements, all battles and conquests, all triumphs of skill and knowledge, all discoveries of science and developments of human life, are under His government and the power of His sceptre; all things are subservient to the great purpose of His death, and preparatory to His second advent. The world seeth Him no more. His name is scarcely mentioned. His presence and His power in history, in the world, are

never dreamt of. But while He has thus clothed Himself with the garment of obscurity, concealing the brightness of His glory, and issuing in silence His commands, He reveals Himself to His Church, gathering into His fold the lost sheep, quickening the dead unto repentance and faith, renewing and sanctifying the hearts of the contrite, and conforming them to His image, until the number of His elect is accomplished, and He, who is now hidden, shall appear, and His glorious power and divine authority as Son of man shall be manifest to all the world.

Of this spiritual power of Jesus on earth, by which He gathers a people to Himself, and prepares His second coming, let us now think.

(1.) Jesus has power on earth to forgive sin. When Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee," the Pharisees thought within themselves, Who can forgive sins, but God alone? They knew that only He, against whom sin is committed, is able to pardon. But they did not know the Son of man, Jesus the Christ, the incarnate Son of the living God, who can give repentance

and the remission of sins. The sinner feels that although he has wronged his fellow-men, yet his sin is chiefly a transgression of God's commandment, and therefore he says, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." Who can turn away the anger of the Lord? who can satisfy divine justice? Who can cancel guilt, and wash away the defilement of sin? Who can silence the accusing adversary, and lift us above the dark clouds of Sinai, the mount of condemnation, and show us the bright blue of heaven, the mercy of God? Jesus only. He who has entered into the Holy of Holies by His own blood, is now before the Father, the Advocate and Righteousness of sinners who trust in Him. And He has power to forgive sin on earth, and the conscience is at peace, the heart that was heavy laden is at rest. Penances, tears, and vigils, pilgrimages and fastings, self-denial and costly offerings, are of no avail; as little will knowledge of Scripture doctrine give peace to the soul. The living Saviour alone, beheld and believed in by the power of the Spirit, Jesus, forgives sin. You remember the story

of Martin Luther. Feeling the burden of his sin, he prayed and fasted; he tried to observe all commandments, and to climb the steep hill of holiness. His burden became only heavier, until he discovered in Scripture that man had no righteousness for God, but that God had provided a righteousness for man; that the love of God meant God's love to us, and not our love to God; that Jesus died for sinners, and that trusting in Him, the sinner had pardon, perfect, immediate, and eternal. Then he said with joy what so many say with their lips only, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin." And knowing the power of Jesus on earth to forgive sin, he feared not the power of pope and emperor, but declared it, to the consolation of thousands who were convinced of sin, that in Jesus is forgiveness and plenteous redemption.

The omnipotence of Jesus to forgive sins is the joy of the Saviour and the marvel of angels. The pardon of a sinner is a greater wonder than the creation of a world; for the one is the result of a divine fiat, the other is the fruit of the incarnation and death of the Son of God.

The pardon of one sinner is a manifestation of greater power than the judgment and the destruction of God's enemies. It is a greater power which can heal the bruised reed, and give it health, than the power which postrates the proudest oak. And Jesus exerts this power so gently, and with such tenderness; as gently as the light comes down from heaven, and as the dew falls on the flowers of earth. We look unto Him, and we are healed.

"As when the Hebrew prophet raised
The brazen serpent high,
The wounded looked, and straight were cured,
The people ceased to die:
So from the Saviour on the cross
A healing virtue flows;
Who looks to Him with lively faith
Is saved from endless woes."

The woman who was a sinner drew near to Jesus. She spoke no word, and Jesus also was silent. But as the Saviour understood her tears, so the very presence of Jesus spoke peace to her heart. For in that Jesus did not shrink from her touch, and allowed her to kiss His feet, she knew that she was accepted. Only draw near to Jesus; only appear before

Him, and He will say, "Go in peace; thy sins are forgiven."

Power to forgive sins—here is omnipotence and love; only that infinite sacrifice of love on Calvary gives Jesus power to pardon and remove our innumerable sins, our unspeakable guilt. Only because Jesus is the Son of God He can say, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will remember thy sins no more."

(2.) Jesus has power to renew the heart. Jesus only. It is only His dying love that melts the heart. It is only Christ lifted up who draws men unto God. While the wintry and keen blasts of the law make us wrap the cloak of self-righteousness and opposition to God more closely and firmly around us, the Sun of Righteousness, the mercy of God, moves us to lay aside our pride, our sin, our hatred and forgetfulness of God. Who can renew the heart? Who can make us love God? Who can change us, after our many years of sinful and ungodly lives? Jesus only! He baptizes with the Holy Ghost, and we are changed, renewed, born again. Do you remember the experience of the African Augus-

tine? All his knowledge and genius, all his philosophy and ambition, could not give him the victory over sin and the fierce power of evil within him. Astonished at the pure and beautiful life of simple and unlearned Christians, he felt vexed at his own weakness and inability to conquer sin, until Jesus appeared to him. For, walking in trouble of heart and conscience in his garden, and hearing the voice of a boy, who, playing a common game with his companion, cried, "Tolle lege," he opened the Scripture, and read the words—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light." Then Jesus took possession of his heart. Sin was conquered. The bondage of Satan was broken. He, who had been sold under sin, was free and strong. He became a burning and shining light, a teacher, bishop and father in the Church of Christ.

(3.) Jesus has power on earth to quicken the dead. It is His divine prerogative to give life. Who but God can kill and make alive again? The Fountain of life for fallen and guilty sinners is with God (Ps. xxxvi. 9, comp. Ps. cxxx. 4; John

i. 4; v. 21), even His Son, who was in the beginning with God, and unto whom the Father hath given to have life in Himself, and to quicken whom He will. Jesus is not merely a teacher or prophet: He is not a restorer of law. It is not instruction merely or principally that we need. If a law could have been given, by which life could come into dead and God-estranged hearts, the advent of Jesus would not have been needed. But the Lord himself came, that we might have life (John x. 10; Gal. iii. 21.) By this He became our Good Shepherd, that He gave His life for the sheep. Not by His doctrine, nor by His example, but by His death, the erring and lost sheep were saved and brought into the fold of peace. And therefore is it impossible for any human image to show forth adequately His pastorate. "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me." The earthly symbol suffices here; but dropping the image, and ascending to the sublime height of His own unparalleled love and power, the Saviour adds, "And I give unto them eternal life." This is the divine power of Jesus, that by the Holy Spirit He gives life to us; the life

of light and knowledge, life spiritual and eternal, life in communion with Him—nay more, life flowing from His own life. He liveth in us. We are branches in Him, who is the True Vine. "Jesus is the Life of my life," * is the hymn of the Christian, as the Apostle Paul exclaimed, "To me to live is Christ." As sin is the cause of death, so righteousness is the channel through which life was brought. On the cross of Christ we were delivered from death, and by His resurrection Jesus became the quickening Spirit. The law and death are behind us; in union with the crucified and risen Saviour we have life, the life of sons; we are born again of incorruptible seed, of the Father's will, by the Spirit's power, through and in Jesus Christ. This is the power of Jesus on earth, that He gives life, and that He is the life of His disciples.

(4.) All power is given unto Jesus on earth to keep His people in faith and love amidst all the temptations and afflictions, conflicts and struggles, giving them the victory over their enemies, and presenting them finally

* Jesu, meines Lebens Leben.

unblamable in body, soul, and spirit before the Father.

Given unto Christ from all eternity, the Good Shepherd, whose own the sheep are, by the election of the Father, by the self-sacrifice of His infinite love, by the indwelling and sealing of the Holy Ghost, keeps them in His omnipotence. He guards them and protects the new and tender life against the hostile and adverse influences by which it is surrounded. He could easily secure their safety by transplanting them at once into the kingdom of everlasting peace, where no conflict disturbs the rest of God's saints; but it is His desire that they should remain on earth, growing in grace, labouring in His vineyard, and glorifying the Father. And while in heaven He is continually interceding on our behalf, that our faith fail not; so on earth He is continually shielding us with the power of His love, and keeping us by the influence of His Spirit.

The more we know of the power of sin, of our weakness, and of the strength of the adversary, the more truly do we feel that divine power alone is able to keep us, and that only

divine love and patience can bear with our continual forgetfulness and unbelief. In the great work of the saints' preservation, as in all works of divine grace, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are manifested in blessed union. It is because the Father and the Good Shepherd are one that none can pluck us out of Christ's hands. It is because the Father purgeth the branch in Christ that it brings forth more fruit. We rest in the bosom of Him who is in the bosom of the Father; we are Christ's, and Christ is God's (John x. 29, 30; xv. 1, 2; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23).

It is by the Spirit that the Father and Son come and take up their abode within us. By the Spirit we are joined with Christ, and kept in Him; sealed with the Spirit of promise, we possess the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.

But while Christ reveals and brings to us the love of the Father and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, we look to *Him* as the Rock on which we are built, the Vine in which we are grafted, the Head from whom cometh our life, the Bridegroom who is our sunshine and joy;

and we rejoice that all power is given unto Him on earth; all power to protect, to guide, to bless; all power to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

Why is it, that when we possess a Saviour, whose power and love are infinite, we are so often filled with fear and despondency, and so frequently need the exhortation, "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees: gird up the loins of your mind, be strong in the Lord, be not afraid nor dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." We are wearied and faint in our minds, because we do not look steadfastly unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, who is *set down at the right hand of God;* unto Him whose omnipotence embraces both heaven and earth, who is strong and mighty in His feeble saints.

While we remember our weakness, we forget His all-sufficient power. While we acknowledge that apart from Christ we can do nothing, we do not rise to the height or depth of Christian humility: I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. While we trust in the

power of the death of Jesus to cancel the guilt of sin, we do not exercise a reliant and appropriating faith in the omnipotence of the living Saviour to deliver us from the bondage and power of sin in our daily life. We forget that Christ worketh in us mightily, and that, one with Him, we possess strength sufficient to overcome every temptation. We are apt either to forget our nothingness, and imagine that in our daily path we can live without sin—that the duties and trials of our everyday life can be performed and borne in our own strength; or we do not avail ourselves of the omnipotence of Jesus, who is able to subdue all things unto Himself, and to keep us from the daily infirmities and falls, which we are apt to imagine an inevitable necessity. If we really depended in all things and at all times on Christ, we would in all things and at all times gain the victory through Him, whose power is infinite, and who is appointed by the Father to be the Captain of our salvation. Then all our deeds would be wrought, not merely before, but in God. We would then do all things to the glory of the Father in the all-powerful name of Jesus, who

is our sanctification. Remember that unto Him all power is given in heaven and on earth, and live by the constant exercise of faith in His power. When anxious to follow the Saviour, remember that Christ the Rock is following us, that, being refreshed and strengthened by Him, we may be able to walk after Him. He is the Beginning of all and the End of all; He himself is the Way; of Him is our fruit found, and His strength is made perfect in weakness. Christ's omnipotence is glorified not merely in the heroic deeds and sufferings of His saints and martyrs, but in the daily strife and obedience of His lowliest members. Let us learn to look unto Him; to lean not on our own strength and resolutions; to expect nothing from our fortitude, and our remembrance of past mercies; instead of being angry with ourselves, vexed and desponding on account of our slow progress and our constant failures, let us most fully believe that we have and are nothing, that with man it is impossible, that in ourselves we have no life which can bring forth fruit, but that Christ is all, that, abiding in Him, and His words dwelling in us, we can bring forth

fruit to the glory of the Father. Is not Jacob called "worm Jacob?" and is not God His everlasting strength?

The exalted Saviour, in all the epistles which He sent from the heavenly Sanctuary to the Churches, encourages by great promises him that overcometh. But to no Church is His promise so exceeding precious and glorious as to lukewarm Laodicea. "To him that overcometh"—this is the promise to lukewarm Laodicea—"will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne."

Is it that the lukewarm, wavering, slumbering heart needs the most loving encouragement, and the most stimulating promise? Oh! then, if we feel the weakness and lassitude of our spirit, and the drowsiness of the enchanted ground; if we have forsaken our first love, and have lost fervour and zeal; if, in the midst of much knowledge of high mysteries and abundance of spiritual privileges, our hearts long for the simple faith and childlike love to Jesus which was ours in former days, let us hear what the Spirit saith to us. Christ will grant

us to sit with Him on His throne. If it is life and peace to touch the hem of His garment; if it is blessedness to weep at His feet, and to hear His voice of pardon; if it is unspeakable honour and joy to sit at the table which Christ has prepared for us in the wilderness—who can conceive or describe the full import of the promise that we shall sit with Him on His throne? We shall be like Him then: the children of the Resurrection, arrayed in white robes, which no sin or earthly dust can stain; crowned with life, and partakers of His power and glory. But while we are not able to endure the brightness of this prospect, let us remember, that if Christ's throne is the end, Christ's path of obedience is to be our path.

To him that overcometh—Christ's throne, even as to Christ, that overcame, the Father's throne. Is the servant above the Master? or could you wish to be different from Christ? He, who is now on the Father's throne, began His earthly life in the manger, and ended it on the cross. He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. He bore ingratitude and contempt. He was wounded in the house of His friends.

He was despised and rejected. Men hated Him without cause. Yet He only loved, blessed, ministered, prayed. He was tempted, and by faith and the Word of God He resisted, He conquered. He came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father that sent Him. Look unto Him and follow. He is the Way, and the end is life and glory everlasting.

Great is the struggle; great is the victory; infinite is the power of our loving Lord in heaven and in earth. Lean on Him, and be faithful. Whatever our sphere and our position, it is one which Christ has assigned to us, and which He thinks not beneath His notice, unworthy of His companionship and of eternal recognition.

> Meek souls these are, who little deem
> Their daily strife an angel's theme,
> Or that the rod they take so calm
> Shall prove in heaven a martyr's palm.

"Compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses"—of angels and of glorified saints—"let us lay aside every weight, and the sin of unbelief which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race set before us, look-

ing unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Ye have need of patience, ye have need of consolation, ye have need of encouragement; hear, therefore, the voice of Jesus—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." You are safe and blessed in His hands; abide in Him.

III.

THE CATHOLIC AND SPIRITUAL CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH.

SERMON III.

THE CATHOLIC AND SPIRITUAL CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH.

"Teach all nations."—MATT. xxviii. 19.

WHAT man or angel, I ask again, could utter such words? Jesus saith, that all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. High above all earthly thrones and heavenly dominions, He speaks of Himself as the Son, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. All nations, from the rudest to the most cultivated, and throughout the whole course of time, are to sit as disciples and learners at His feet; through Him they are to enter into covenant-relationship with the Triune God. In this highest economy of divine grace and power His commandments have absolute and exclusive authority; and as the presence of Jehovah was with the children of Israel in the wilderness, and with Joshua in the promised land, so this

divine Lord assures His disciples of His presence with them to the end of the age.

Such is the dignity, power, and glory which Jesus claims. He who is meek and lowly in heart, who never sought His own honour, whose words were always words of soberness and truth, full of power and reality—He always is what He says, possesses what He claims, gives what He promises.

Remember, how only a few weeks before He uttered this heaven-high and world-wide commission, His cause had, to all human judgment, and according to all outward appearance, failed; His plans had been completely frustrated; His work had ceased. Never had man, according to the world's view, been so entirely and irrecoverably defeated. After His ministry of three years, what was the result of His words and works? His nation rejected Him, and preferred to Him Barabbas, who was a robber. The highest spiritual authority of the land pronounced Him a blasphemer. The Scribes, the Pharisees, the High Priest, the representatives of the law of Moses, of the covenant, and of the temple, judged Him worthy of an ignominious

death. Roman justice thought Him too unimportant to protect Him against the hatred of His enemies, and to provoke the displeasure of the people they sought to conciliate. So He was crucified between two malefactors. His very disciples forsook Him and were scattered. The world rejected Him, and saw, in His death on the cross and in His burial, the conclusion and final destruction of His work and mission.

Remember this, and then listen to the words of the risen Jesus. With what royal and calm emphasis He asserts His omnipotence in heaven and earth. In perfect assurance of victory, He sends messengers, not merely to His own people, whose language He had spoken, whose Scriptures He unfolded and fulfilled, who had witnessed His miracles and listened to His words, but to all the nations of the world, to bring them into the obedience of His faith. And consider whom He entrusted with this work. The very disciples who had been offended in Him, and had deserted Him in the hour of trial; Peter, who had denied Him thrice; Philip, who knew so little of Him, though He had been so long time with them;

Thomas, so full of gloomy doubt and obstinate unbelief; such disciples, weak and ignorant, He sends forth, relying on them as strong and invincible. And what are the weapons with which they are to conquer? The sword is the Word; the foolishness of preaching, the message of Christ and Him crucified. And all the protection He gives them is a hostile world; all the resources He places at their disposal are not power or wisdom, not wealth or eloquence, but His own hidden yet perfect omnipotence, His real spiritual and all-sufficient Presence.

Truly Christ's kingdom is not of this world. Here is the weakness of God, which is stronger than man. The sheep whom Jesus sent forth in the midst of wolves are protected by an unseen Lamb, and they gain the victory with weapons which man's reason can neither discover nor appreciate. The commission which the risen Saviour gave to His disciples,* which no worldly

* "A century and a half after the Incarnation, Celsus ridicules the idea of a universal religion as a manifest folly. . . . Christ founds a world-wide religion, and He promises to be the present invigorating force of that religion to the end of time. Are we not too accustomed to this language to feel the full force of its original meaning? How startingly must it not have fallen

ear heard, and which would have appeared to Jew and Greek an idle dream and foolish presumption, has now been tested by eighteen centuries. But I trust you believe its divine truth and power not on account of the evidence of history—that is, because you see—but because by the Holy Ghost you know, that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father; because by faith you see Him, whom the world seeth no more; because you have experienced in your hearts, that Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour.

There are two aspects of the command of Christ, Go and teach, or disciple, all nations, which claim our attention. (1.) The universality—all nations. (2.) The spiritual character of the commission—teach, instruct, make them disciples, learners, in my school.

I. When Jesus was on earth, He did not go to all nations, but confined His ministry to Israel. While He was with His disciples, He said unto

upon the ears of apostles! . . . Can we imagine such a command of our Lord upon the lips of the best, of the wisest men whom we have ever known?"—LIDDON, "Bampton Lectures," p. 117.

them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any of the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not." You remember how very emphatically He dwelt on the limits of His commission when the Syrophenician woman implored His help, and He replied, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The exceptions which He made in obedience to the guidance of His heavenly Father, and the spirit of love and joy with which He received the Gentiles, who were thus brought to Him by God, explain to us sufficiently the nature and reason of the limitation. It was according to the divine purpose, according to the method of God's dealings with Israel and the nations, that Jesus should first go to His own people, preaching to them the gospel of the kingdom, and endeavouring to gather them under the wings of His mercy and holy love. He was Israel's Messiah and King. He was sent first of all to the children. He was a minister of the circumcision, to fulfil the promises made unto the fathers. He visited the vineyard which God had planted. The angel of the covenant came to His temple. But Israel itself was chosen in

Him for the salvation of the world. And even during His earthly ministry in Israel, Jesus thought with joy and love of the Gentiles who should come to the light, and enter the fold of divine peace. There is something very marked and thrilling in all the instances (recorded in the gospel) of Gentiles received by Jesus.

Have you not noticed how the Lord marvelled at the faith of the Roman centurion, and of the Syrophenician woman? With astonishment He exclaimed, "I have not found such faith, no not in Israel." With intense gladness and wonder He said, "O woman! great is thy faith." Have you not noticed with what trembling emotion His soul is filled when He hears of the Greeks who had come to the feast, and who wished to see Him? "The hour is come," He said, "that the Son of man should be glorified." Has it never struck you, how, in the tone of confiding friendship, He said plainly to the woman of Samaria what He had not said so simply to Israel—"I that speak unto thee am He"? And have you not felt the affectionate yearning in His words—"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring"?

Jesus loves Israel with a special love. Nothing—not even their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah—can change the peculiar position of Israel in God's plan and kingdom. Jesus is Israel's Messiah and King; His relation to them is peculiar and unique. But it is for the sake and for the benefit of the whole world that Israel was chosen. And now the time had come. The gospel of salvation was to be preached to the whole world; He, who had formerly said "Go not," now utters the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." He throws open Samaria and all regions, even to the uttermost ends of the earth. The rejection of Israel's Messiah results in a twofold dispersion. In judgment, the Jews are scattered among all the nations of the earth; in love and mercy, in blessing, the Church is sent to all peoples and tongues.

"All nations." The words, and the conception of universality, have become very familiar to us.

This comprehensiveness, this universality of thought, love, and design, is from above; it is

not human, but divine. No human mind ever rose to the height of this conception, no human heart ever expanded to the comprehensiveness and breadth of this affection, no human imagination ever dreamt of a union so vast. Let us not be mistaken. In modern times unbelievers have decked themselves with borrowed ornaments; the Egyptians have beautified themselves with Israel's glory. The true ideas of fraternity and equality come exclusively from revelation. Only Israel, of all nations of antiquity, knew the true dignity and the true purpose of humanity. Only the Church, since the advent of our Lord, possessed the true spirit of humanity and character of catholicity. Let us remember the Bible facts and teaching; let us believe the testimony of the sure Word, the simple and grand truths of revelation, which must outlive the errors and theories which, under various forms, rise against them in every age.

The Bible, and the Bible only, taught firmly and clearly the *unity of the human race.*

"God, who giveth to all life and breath and all things, hath made of one blood all

nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations." Thus Paul preached at Athens. Significant is the place where the apostle made this declaration, for Athens represents the wisdom of the world; and in every age the highest earthly wisdom needs to be taught by the Word of God. We believe in the unity of the human race on the testimony of Scripture; whether science assents or contradicts is a matter of indifference to us, as far as our faith and knowledge and certainty are concerned. We are one race, Scripture teaches, and in this fact are involved wonderful and important truths.

First, as we are the children of Adam, all human beings are equal, created in the image of God, forming one family of mankind, called to light and holiness and blessedness. As all truths, this great truth is confirmed and illuminated by the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, Scythian nor barbarian. There is no inferior race, stamped to servitude and ignorance. The whole world of humanity, descended of Adam, loved by the Father, has its

centre in the man Christ Jesus. All families on earth are to be blessed in the Son of man.

This equality is, alas! also an equality in sin and in condemnation. The whole human race, forming a unity, fell in Adam. By the sin of one man, the many were constituted sinners. It is the whole world which is lost. Mankind, even the whole family of Adam, has departed from God, and is in a state of sin, condemnation, misery, and death. In Adam all have sinned, and death has come upon all. Here alone we have disclosed the solution of the marvellous fact of the universal prevalence of sin and misery; here we behold the source of the many rivers of selfishness, pride, lust, of moral evil, which run through the whole territory of human history.

But, thirdly, the unity of the race is a blessed fact, when we remember that the Son of God became man. He entered our circle, He took upon Him our nature: the Word was made flesh. Let, therefore, the whole world rejoice; every one that is descended of Adam, that bears the human image, let him take courage, let him breathe hope, let him say with gratitude and

joy, "Unto us a Child is born, a Son is given."

Man is created in God's image; the whole race is one family, fallen in Adam. Unto the whole race Christ is sent: He is given unto man as man; a new centre to the whole family of mankind.

Now Scripture, and Scripture only, teaches this grand truth about mankind. Here alone is the true idea of humanity; here alone is true catholicity.

The foundation is in the five books of Moses and the Prophets; the fulfilment is in Christ, as revealed by evangelists and apostles.

Who can read the first three chapters of Genesis without feeling: no human wisdom discovered, no human imagination invented this sublime history. Contrasted with heathen mythologies and with modern speculation, how simple, and grand, and full of light are the disclosures of the Scriptures! Here we see the source of the manifold streams of sin and misery which meet us in history. The universal prevalence of sin is accounted for, and through the awful darkness and enigma of sin shines

the original dignity and high destiny of man, and the still more glorious and sublime promise of redemption.

Moses explains to us the diversity of the human race. The sons of Noah are Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and the whole history of the world was foreshadowed in the inspired prediction of Noah. The dispersion of the nations at Babel (a fact, of which historical evidence is continually increasing in strength and variety) is the preparation for the election of a peculiar people. But never is the unity of the race, or the world-wide love of God, lost sight of. The purpose of God is constantly announced—"The whole earth shall be filled with my glory." And not merely is the history of Israel connected with the history of the race, and Abraham traced back to Noah and Seth and Adam; but before the history of the chosen people commences, God takes a farewell record of the nations, inscribing the names of their tribes in the Scriptures—thus assuring us, that though for a season He permits them to go their own way during the times of ignorance, yet He is also the God of the Gentiles, and hath foreordained

their ultimate blessing and incorporation into His kingdom on earth. The Book of Genesis is the true book of humanity. The promise to Abraham is, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The glory of Shiloh, as predicted by Jacob, is, "To him shall the nations be gathered." The jubilant tone of all psalms and prophets is, "Praise him, all ye nations; Messiah is a light to lighten the Gentiles. Distant isles shall know His truth; all heathen people shall forsake their idols, and walk in the light of Jacob." Israel is the central nation; Israel's Messiah, Centre of Israel and of the world; Jerusalem, not Rome, is the God-chosen centre of catholicity.

The purpose of God, world-wide in its final aim, appears at first hidden in the election of one nation.

Israel was separated from all other nations; God isolated them. He fenced them round by His marvellous dealings, and by the peculiar law which He gave them. They dwelt apart, in every sense of the word. They were not sent forth as ambassadors of God's truth. Their mission was not to be aggressive. The

light was to burn in Judea with an intense and concentrated brightness, and the promise given to Israel was that all nations would be attracted by Jerusalem's glory, and come to worship Israel's God.

The nations of the world, for whose sake Israel was chosen, await yet the restoration of God's people, through whom they are to be blessed. When Israel returns unto Jehovah and their King David, then the ancient predictions shall be fulfilled—all lands and kingdoms will be filled with the knowledge of God; the reign of the Son of man shall commence, and from the river to the great sea the Lord shall be worshipped and glorified. Not till then shall the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. Then shall the Lord be King over the whole earth; the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven; the whole family of mankind serves Christ; Israel is the firstborn, the elder brother of many nations.

Such is the purpose of God, as revealed in the prophets before the advent of Christ. Such was the expectation of all faithful Israelites.

They waited for Messiah, who would redeem His people, and be a light to lighten the Gentiles; who would bring all nations to join Israel in the worship and obedience of Jehovah. That they themselves, as a nation, would reject the Messiah, and that between the first advent in humility and the second in glory a long interval would intervene, was hidden to their view. The two events appeared to them as one; they expected Messiah to come and reign, to usher in the last days of fulfilment. As two mountain heights seen from afar merge into one, the long distance between them being concealed, so they beheld only one advent. The mystery of the Church was not revealed as yet.

Israel's rejection of the Messiah must have appeared to human reasoning as the frustration of God's plan, as a dark enigma, as a sad and fatal termination of the history of God's kingdom. But Israel's unbelief cannot make void the promises of God. The fall of Israel becomes the occasion of a new and more wonderful manifestation of divine grace and power and wisdom. God hath not cast off His people. The gifts and callings of God are without repent-

ance. All Israel shall be saved, and then from Zion, as a central source, streams of blessing shall flow into all lands. But during the period of Israel's national rejection, God's merciful purposes are carried out through a new creation of His love and power—the Church of Jesus Christ.

Simultaneous with the rejection of the gospel by Israel is the origin of the Church. Not, as even apostles at first imagined, are Gentiles added unto Israel, and incorporated into the nation; but the Church is the body of Christ; gathered from among all nations by the Holy Spirit, and united with Him, who is the Head, the glorified and exalted Redeemer. In the Church is neither Jew nor Greek. Chosen from among all nations and tribes, the Church is in the world a light and a witness, testifying of the grace of God bringing salvation, which hath appeared, and of the judgment and glory which shall be manifest at the second advent of our Lord. The object and mission of the Church is to gather, through her testimony of truth and love, a people who by faith are saved, and by

the Holy Ghost are separated from the world, serving God, and waiting for the return of Jesus.

The Church is in and for the world, yet not of it. She has been delivered from this "evil age." She is to be and labour among all nations; yet she is above all nations, having her citizenship in heaven, and waiting for the manifestation of the kingdom of Christ.

She is to benefit the world as light, as salt, irradiating the darkness of God-estranged humanity, and preventing the rapid development of its intrinsically evil character; yet the Church always remains to the end of this dispensation distinct, and in reality opposed to the nations among whom she lives, and whom she blesses. Like her divine Master, she is not of the world. God has chosen her out of the world. There are many Christians among the nations; according to the divine purpose there will be Christians among all nations. But there are no Christian nations. There is no nation during this dispensation, who in repentance and faith and renewal has died to the spirit of the world, who in meekness of heart, as

children of God, inherit the earth, who believe God's truth and seek God's glory, who pursue spiritual and holy methods, and prize heavenly and substantial realities. The Church of Christ is born out of the death of natural life. She is rooted in Golgotha. She commences with the first day of the week in the power of a new, a resurrection life. The natural man loves his own Adamic life; he savours the things that are of man; he has confidence in the flesh; he clings to his own righteousness and strength, cherishes and cultivates his own wisdom and beauty, and is not willing, by losing his life, to gain the eternal Christ-life. How can nations, the majority of whom are not regenerate, and whose whole spirit, aim, and method are worldly and not heavenly, ever be regarded as Christian? How can we so far forget the character and dignity of Christ, as to imagine that during the last centuries the kingdoms of Europe have fulfilled the promise of Christ's reign on earth, of the Father's kingdom, in which His name is hallowed, and His will is done?

Throughout this dispensation the Church is

hated by the world, as Jesus predicted it—"Ye shall be hated by all nations for my name's sake." The Church is at present a widow and a stranger; she is called to witness, to suffer, to endure reproach, and yet to rejoice in her Lord, and to gain victories with spiritual weapons. She knows from the testimony of the Word, that the kingdom's advent is preceded by times of unbelief and rebelliousness, that in the latter days men shall become more opposed to the truth of God, and more alienated from a life of godliness. Yet is the Church full of power, love, and hope. She teaches the nations in all ages, gathering from among them the citizens of the heavenly kingdom, and blessing even those who yield not to her entreaty. The Church is strong by her weakness; she conquers the world by keeping herself unspotted from it. Her only security is in humility, and in the remembrance of her heavenly character and calling. Like the Master, she must resist the temptations of Satan to give her the kingdoms of the world, preferring obedience and divine sonship, fasting, shame, and poverty to the treasures of Egypt. She must set her face

steadfastly towards Jerusalem—that is, the cross of Christ. She must go with Christ outside the camp, bearing the reproach. She is a widow at present, and not a queen. She fills up what is behind of the afflictions of Christ. As He was in the world not known, not loved, not obeyed, the Son of man in loneliness, and the Friend of sinners, so is the Church.

For though not of the world, she loves the world; like her heavenly Master, she loves all. She despises not the weak and ignorant; affectionately and reverently she gathers the children, the poor and lowly ones, who have no wealth or wisdom, no skill or beauty; for she knows how the Father and Christ and angels rejoice over *one* poor and lost sheep that is brought into the fold. She despises not, neither turns away in haughty pride and disgust from the most degraded and loathsome, knowing that it is the glory of the Only-begotten to save the chief of sinners, that the blood of the Son of God cleanseth from all sin, and that the Holy Ghost renews and sanctifies the rebellious and God-estranged heart. She is not terrified or chilled by the criticism, erudition,

and subtlety of human wisdom, by the power and splendour of human thrones and dominions; she is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, knowing that He is the wisdom and power of God, and that He is able to abase all pride, and to bring down everything that is lofty by the sweetness of His light and dying love. She loves all nations; she yearns over all human beings, whatever their age, condition, culture. She instructs kings, and teaches wisdom, judgment, and equity to senators. She testifies to the rich of mercy and humility and charity. She ministers especially unto the lonely, the sorrowful, and the afflicted, directing them to the true Fountain of peace and of consolation, to the only Rest and Strength of the weary. And in the exercise of her heavenly and catholic mission she is independent of outward position and circumstances. The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church; and from the catacombs, where the persecuted disciples of the Crucified met, His name went forth victorious, to destroy idolatry and heathenism, and to subdue thousands of hearts to the only blessed Master. The Church of Christ can

speak in simplicity to the most ignorant and degraded tribe, and bring the light of divine love to illumine the night of barbarism and superstition; and she is able to enter into the thought of the most cultured; and, possessing the wisdom which is from above, she is able to interpret aright the elements and presentiments of truth, and to satisfy the nobler aspirations and longings which, amidst the errors and sins of humanity, testify alike of our fall and grandeur. The Church is all things to all men, because she is in, and for and above the world. And though few believe her report, and she expects that the spirit of the world, opposed to God and Christ, will yet manifest itself more fully and intensely, she is full of hope, knowing that the kingdom and the power and the glory are God's, that Christ shall appear and reign with His saints, that all nations shall praise the Lord, and the whole earth be filled with His glory.

II. The spiritual character of the commission—"Teaching them."*

* Μαθητεύειν, make disciples. There is no contrast between

Men are to be taught. The Word is the sword of the Spirit. By the Word the heart is conquered, and the Word is the bread which nourishes and strengthens the soul. Truth is the element which separates or sanctifies the people of God, even as it is by the Word of truth that they were first begotten to be the first-fruits of His creatures. The apostles received the Word; "Thy Word," as the Lord Jesus says to the Father, "which I gave to them." Jesus has not entrusted us with ceremonies and rites; He has not invested His apostles with an official authority, by which to excite men's fears, and

μαθητεύειν and διδάσκειν; the one is only the commencement and initiation of the other. It is only by the *Word* that we are brought as learners and disciples unto Christ. What else but the preaching of the gospel, the voice of the Shepherd, brings men into the school of Christ, there to be instructed and trained. In what other way did Christ gain the apostles, or the apostles gather the first congregations in Jerusalem and in the house of Cornelius, among Jews and Gentiles? We are told that the three thousand continued steadfastly in the doctrine (διδαχή) of the apostles; yet it was that very doctrine which had discipled them. They that had gladly received the word of Peter (τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ) were baptized. (The idea of instruction is in the term, as for instance, Matt. xiii. 52—"Every scribe which is instructed (μαθητευθείς) unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which brought forth out of his treasure things new and old.")

persuade them to blind submission. He has not commissioned us to bestow benedictions and apply remedies which are not understood by the people, deriving their efficacy from the human mediators, and exerting it in a magical manner. Christ said to Peter, "Feed my sheep." But He never said to the flock, "Obey Peter." He said to His apostles, "He that heareth you heareth me." But in these words He gave a new promise; He did not institute a new legislation. Nowhere does Christ say to the Church, "He that heareth the apostles heareth me." For whereas the faithful and obedient apostles are comforted by the assurance that their word is not their own, but the Master's who sent them, the people, who through them obey the truth, feel the authority of *God*, hear the voice of the *Shepherd*, see the countenance of *Christ*. Heavenhigh above all apostles and ministers, visible and accessible to all, even the youngest and weakest disciple, is the Head of the Church—the Lord Jesus Himself. The commission is, Teach them. Make them learners. Tell them as plainly and simply as human language can express it, the

mysteries of the kingdom. Keep back nothing that is profitable, testify of me; preach the gospel; you have no other instrument, influence, or power.

Thus it was always with God's people. There is no book like Scripture in which men are so constantly exhorted to think, to consider, to reason, to learn, to meditate, to remember. There is no book so opposed to all blind obedience and assumption of external authority. There is no book so opposed to the pride and selfishness of an esoteric school, keeping the people in subjection and partial ignorance. God teaches Israel. What no human wisdom or ingenuity could have discovered, God reveals to them; but His words are simple and clear. He commands them to listen, to read, to repeat it frequently, to teach it to their children, to make it the subject of meditation and topic of conversation. Read especially the Book of Deuteronomy, the Psalms, the Book of Proverbs, and you will see that from the beginning God made His children disciples, learners. In no language are there so many and so profound words for knowledge, judgment, understanding,

and meditation as in Hebrew, and all used in connection with the *Word of God.*

If it be said they had ceremonies, I reply, The expression is ambiguous. They had no ceremonies in the sense of rites performed by a privileged class, who alone possessed the knowledge of their significance, or outward observances, which, instead of channels, were substitutes for knowledge and inward possession of truth. God appointed in Israel symbols, and they were explained in His Word; and the prayer of God's saints was, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonders: the secret, hidden, and essential meaning of Thy law."

The statutes and commandments of the Lord were given to the whole nation. Every father was commanded to teach and explain them to his household. When thy son asketh thee, "What *mean* the testimonies and the statutes which the Lord our God has commanded us?" then instruction is to be given, that from early childhood men may know and understand the Word of God.

What a contrast is this to the mediæval Church, which withheld the Scriptures from the

people,* and fed the souls of men with self-invented and complicated rites, performed in a language which was not understood by the multitude! And how thoroughly false and unscriptural is the thought, which sees in this fearful apostacy and transgression of the divine will a wise adaptation to the rudeness and ignorance of the nations among whom the Church was planted! How far below the level of the Old Testament spirit are the priestly assumption and ritual method of the Papal Church! The Jews believed that the entrance of God's Word giveth light, it maketh wise the simple; and among them was many a Timothy, who knew the Scriptures from a child, because the

* Bengel, "Apophthegmata:"—"Fredericus Fulgentius, theologian in Venice, preached on the words, 'Have ye not read?' (Matt. xii. 10). 'If the Saviour were to ask this question to-day, all the people would have to reply, "No, we have not read, because we are forbidden to read." I have sought truth in the desert, in the cities, in society, in monasteries, at the Court of the Pope, who calls himself infallible, and have not found it anywhere. Yet at last I did find it, even in this book' (producing a New Testament, but putting it immediately back into his pocket); 'but you must not seek the truth there, for it is forbidden to read it.'"

The undeniable fact that the Church of Rome keeps the Scriptures from the people, ought to be quite sufficient to indicate her true character.

Word of God is able to make even the most ignorant and feeble wise unto salvation. And this, as the greatest and fundamental blessing, was the promise of God—"And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers." Where the authority of Jehovah, of the Lord Christ, is fully acknowledged, His servants are not lords over God's heritage, but stewards of divine mysteries, teachers and witnesses of the truth.

When the Lord commanded His disciples to teach all nations, the apostles understood His meaning; the Old Testament and the example of Christ had prepared them for their future work. Jesus came as a prophet to Israel. He taught by word, and His works also were signs, showing forth His character as well as His power; teaching the nature of the kingdom, as well as announcing and attesting the authority of His mission. The disciples had listened to Christ's teaching; so clear and simple, so penetrating, convincing, and comforting. He spoke with authority, but not with the authority de-

manding blind and inert obedience, but the authority of light, truth, love, which establishes a throne in the heart and conscience, and wields a sceptre of righteousness and constraining affection. His authority was divine, and therefore bringing liberty, light, and peace to all who submit themselves to Him. His authority separated not Him and His people, but linked them in strong and sweet bonds of fellowship; it was not external, oppressing them as a weight, but enabling them to mount as with eagle's wings into the region of divine life and blessedness. And the great channel of His authority, and quickening and renewing power, was the Word.

The apostles continued the ministry of the Word. Remember Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost. How easy would it have been for him to assume authority, and to dispense with teaching! How easy would it have been for him to point to the miraculous manifestations, and to claim obedience to the accredited messengers of the Messiah, and thus use the excitement of the astonished multitude to bring them under the sway of priestly domination! Instead of

this, instead of any assertion of authority and power of the keys, the Apostle Peter teaches, and reminding his countrymen, to whom pertained the Divine oracles, of the Prophecy of Joel, of the 16th Psalm, which testifies of the Holy One of God conquering death and the grave, of the 110th Psalm, in which, by the Holy Ghost, David calls his son Lord, and beholds Him at the right hand of God—he declares the mystery of Christ's cross and resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. He taught the Scriptures. He first analysed the prophecies, and having brought before His brethren, as it were, the syllables into which the great Word, the all-comprehensive message, had been divided, he gathers them up in the full announcement of the great salvation. Thus was the Church founded through the teaching of Scripture. Men believed by the Holy Ghost the testimony of truth, the apostolic teaching of God's revealed and fulfilled promises. How different from the self-styled successors of Peter, who keep the Word of God from the people, and with "blind mouths" usurp authority over God's heritage!

Look at the Bereans. They are commended in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scripture daily whether these things were so. The apostles preached; the people examined. They did not believe the gospel on the authority of the apostles; no such authority or mediatorial position was claimed by the messengers of Christ. They declared the Word of God, and the people of Berea are commended for their earnestness, activity, independence of mind, or rather dependence on God, in that they searched the Scriptures to convince themselves of the truth and reality of the glad tidings declared to them. It is not an assertion of the right of private judgment, of the authority or sufficiency of reason; but an assertion of the only and all-sufficient authority of God, of the Scriptures, which are given by inspiration, and by which the Lord speaks to the hearts and consciences of men. Thus did the apostles make men learners in the school of Christ. Thus did they bring men under the immediate influence of divine teaching and authority. Thus it was that they never said, Believe us, believe the

Church. The Church of Christ never speaks of her own authority; the moment she does so, she denies her character as a witness and bride. Christ is the Sun; the Church derives all her light from Him.

And to show that there is no exception to this rule and method of teaching, we have both the record of the apostolic history, and the experience of modern missions, proving that no nation is so sunk in idolatry and vice, so degraded and ignorant, but the Word of God is able to penetrate the darkness with enlightening and healing power. The Word is the sword; let it not be sheathed, and rendered powerless in the ceremonies and traditions and concealments of human adaptation and policy. The truth can make all men free; we have no right to bring them into an intermediate region of tutelage and bondage. How flimsy appear the defences of pictures and ceremonies when considered in the light of Scripture! Did the apostles, coming to idolatrous, rude, and uncultured tribes, find it necessary to have recourse to images and ritual? did they think it wise and right to keep the people in a state of

infantine passiveness and mechanical obedience? Were not the people of Ephesus superstitious heathen worshippers of the golden image of Diana, which, they said, had fallen down from heaven? Did they not practise sorcery and magic? Were they not enthusiastic and ardent in their idolatrous practices? And how did the Apostle Paul treat them? How did he adapt himself and his message to their condition and capacity? Did he present to them half-truths, and give them a scanty instalment of the doctrines of life? No, he declared to them the whole counsel of God; and as you may see from the epistle which he wrote to them afterwards, he taught them the mystery of the love of God, of the election of the Father, the Headship and glory of Christ, the oneness of the risen Head and the believer who is sealed by the Holy Ghost. God's truth is for all nations, and it alone can bring light to the mind, peace to the conscience, and the life of love to the heart.

The Church was founded by the Word of God. The apostles had received the Word from the Lord, from the Son, who is the perfect mani-

festation of the Father, in whom all previous revelations find their fulfilment, by whom grace and truth come to all, who have learned to feel themselves poor and needy in the school of Moses. Given to the disciples by Christ as the Father's Word (John xvii. 14; viii. 28), and brought back to their remembrance by the power of the Holy Ghost, who guided them unto all truth, and glorified Christ, they preached the Word of God, which is now, in the dispensation of the Spirit, essentially promise, gospel, salvation (1 Pet. i. 25). The Word is seed, spirit, and life; by and in the Word, the Holy Ghost quickens, purifies, and sanctifies. He causes the Word to dwell richly in the hearts of God's children, and to build them up (1 Pet. i. 23; Acts xx. 32). The congregations which had been called into life by the Word needed nothing else for their preservation, growth, and comfort, but the *Word;* hence the apostles always commended them to the Word of grace, and exhorted them to let the Word of Christ dwell in them richly, while they took care to appoint faithful men, apt to teach, in order that the testimony of truth may be con-

tinued, and the Word of God grow and be glorified.

All means of grace have the character of the Word of God. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which the apostles delivered unto the congregation as having received them from the *Lord*, are His Word, showing His covenant, revealing His gracious purpose and wondrous acts, declaring and sealing saving truth. Singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs is also the Word of God, whereby saints teach and admonish one another. So spiritual according to the will of Christ and the teaching of the apostles, is the idea of the Church. To form the true and scriptural idea of the Church, we must start, not from the believer, or the congregation, or the complex of congregations, but from Christ the Head, who, by the Holy Ghost, gathers living souls round Him, and unites them with Himself to be His body. The Church is the communion of believers, who, by the Holy Ghost, are one with Christ the Head. She is the body of Christ, the building of God, the spiritual house, the bride and wife of Christ (Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii.; Eph. i.

23; 1 Cor. iii. 9; Eph. ii. 21; ix. 23; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Rev. xxi. 9.) Only saints, believers, the elect, are members of the Church; for the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are His."

True, that the outward and visible associations of professed believers are like nets, which embrace both good and bad fishes, like fields in which tares grow among the wheat, like a large house, in which there are vessels to honour and some to dishonour. But although this is evil and sad, yet the wisdom and long-suffering of God are revealed also here. The true Church of Christ is thereby kept vigilant and humble, believers are stirred up to self-examination and earnestness, they take oil in their lamps; and through the faithful and spiritual ministry of the Word, there are added continually unto the true Church, not merely from among the Jews and heathen, but from among the dead and worldly, who only outwardly belong to the congregation of Christ. And the more fully we cling to the spiritual and heavenly character of the Church—the more distinctly and

faithfully we declare that only the regenerate, who are joined by the Holy Ghost to the Head, are members of the mystical Body, the greater will be our influence on those who, although among us, are not yet of us—the more shall we experience the present power and grace of our Lord, who raiseth the dead unto newness of life, and giveth light.* Although Christ warns us against judging hastily, and separating between tares and wheat (Matt. xiii. 24), He has on the other hand established discipline in His Church. Not merely Peter, but all the apostles —not merely the apostles, but the congregations of Christ, as such, have, according to the Word of the Lord, power to bind and loose (Matt. xviii. 17, 18; John xx. 23; 1 Cor. v. 11; 1 Tim. i. 20).

And thus our position *is essentially the same as that of the apostolic Churches.* The circumstance that the proportion of mere outward professors of what is called "Christianity" is immensely increased, does not alter the character and aim of the Church of Christ. Her character

* Compare Sermon VII., on the Relation of the True Church to the actual Professing Church.

is that she is not of the world, but Spirit-born and Spirit-inhabited; that she is one with Christ; that she is heavenly, and waiting for the coming of the Lord.

In a world of sin and unbelief she is the witness and light sent by Christ. And the Word which she has received from her Lord she giveth unto the world. Men may think little of the Word, and think the Church poor and weak, which possesses no other riches, weapons, and glory. But Christ is with us, and works through us by the Word.

Where the Word of God is, there is worship in spirit and truth; there are priests, who, through the eternal and blessed High Priest, live in the presence of God, offering unto Him the spiritual sacrifices which are holy and acceptable. Where the Word of God is, faith, love, and hope abound; believers grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Where the Word of God is, souls rejoice in the assurance of their salvation. By this Word of Truth souls are born again unto eternal life; so that Christ sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. And His word, though it appear

contemptible in the eyes of Goliath, is the power by which God's Spirit convinces and enlightens the mind, and brings the proud thoughts and imaginations of man into subjection to the wisdom and truth of the living God. As Luther says, "Of all the sacred gifts bestowed on the Church, the Word is the first and greatest. It is the Word, also, which baptizes and blesses, which binds and looses." All things are given to us by that Word, of which Christ, the Eternal Word, is the spirit and life, and through which the Holy Ghost reveals and glorifies the Saviour. "Christ only," and the "Word of God only," is the watchword of the little flock to whom pertain the promises of God.

Let nothing beguile you from the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus. Let not the boast of antiquity, of comprehensiveness—let not the appearance of grandeur, vastness, splendour, disturb your minds; listen not to the voice of her who sits as a queen; who is enthroned, and exercises authority, and by human power, cunning, and fascination subdues many hearts and kingdoms; who speaketh constantly of her authority, and

honoureth not the Lord and the word of His testimony; who promiseth great things to those who submit themselves to her, instead of pointing men to the Lamb of God, the only Lord and Bridegroom of the soul; who boasteth herself to be the guardian of the truth, and the only administrator of the blessings of the new covenant, and persecuted unto death the witnesses of God's grace and the true pastors, who had compassion on the multitude, and taught them the salvation of Jesus. When they say, "Lo, here is the Church!" believe them not; for the true Church always says, "Look unto Christ; lift up your eyes, and behold your God; look unto the Saviour, all ye ends of the earth." When they teach you the commandments of men, when they speak to you of time-hallowed ceremonies and sacred institutions of the Church, believe them not; for in like manner did the Pharisees make void the commandments of God by their own tradition, and we know that One is our Master, even Christ, and that we are all brethren. We know that the mystery of iniquity began even in the days of the apostles, and that in the dark pilgrimage of earth, not antiquity,

but the sure word of prophecy, is the light and strength of Christ's people.

The Church is where the Word of God is.*

* The Reformers spoke very clearly and emphatically on the true character of the gospel ministry. "See to it," thus Luther writes in the preface to his Shorter Catechism—"See to it, pastor and preacher; our office has become something quite different from what it was under the Papacy; it has become now serious and salutary, and therefore brings with it more toil and labour, danger and temptation." And from other writings of his we notice the following declarations—"The Church consists not of worldly, visible things, as places, buildings, goods; but the Church is a Christian, holy people, and holiness is where the Holy Ghost gives to men faith in Christ, and thereby sanctifies them; that is, He gives to them a new heart, and writes the commandments of God in hearts of flesh. To call those who preach the Word and administer the sacraments priests, was done in a pagan spirit, or remained from the Jewish law, to the great injury of Christendom. The office and ministry of the Word pertain to all Christians and disciples (1 Pet. ii. 9, and elsewhere): but the Word is the highest of all priestly functions; with it we bless, baptize, bind, loose, judge. And since all Christians are to preach, to all belongs likewise the whole priesthood, the only New Testament sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 5); wherefore it is not right that one person should usurp it, but the right of the congregation demands that one or more persons should be chosen, set apart and accepted, to exercise the office instead and in the name of the others, to prevent fearful disorder. Hence he speaks not of priestly indelible marks, but of elders and ministers, bishops and stewards," &c. This important aspect of truth must be combined with another, not contradictory, but supplementary—viz., that the Church is an organism, in which there are leaders,

And though the false church call schismatics the simple disciples who are gathered round Christ by the Word, and who know of no Priest but Jesus, and no authority but the Scriptures, and no worship but the worship in spirit and in truth; who have no other Head but the ascended Saviour, and no other apostles but teachers and pastors, who give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word—they are the true Church, the chosen saints of God, who are blessed of God in the conversion of souls and upbuilding of believers, who shall come with Christ in glory and share His throne. The true disciples of Christ, the successors of the apostles, have always been persecuted, tormented, and put to death by the false church. Like a bright gleam of sunshine in the midst of soul-oppressive darkness, the gospel, translated into the vernacular by Peter Waldus, brought peace and joy to the people, to the poor, to artisans and peasants. They meditated on God's Word, and talked about God's marvellous works and promises on their

teachers, shepherds, and rulers, given by Christ and deriving their authority from the Head. Compare Sermon VIII.

journeys, in their workshops, in their leisure hours at night, and the melody of the evangel was heard in their lowly homes; a band of evangelists, filled with the Holy Ghost, and abundantly furnished with the Word of God, went forth into many villages and cities and lands, a true Church and Brotherhood. The Word of God had made them great; the false church, with cruel hatred, put them to death.

What was the treatment experienced by the apostolic Wicklef, who, feeling the power and blessedness of the Word, evangelised and sent forth disciples, to teach plainly the truth of God and love of the Saviour. Why was the apostolic Huss persecuted and burned? Can we forget the cruelties, persecutions, banishments, tortures, deaths, with which the so-called church pursued and punished the followers of Jesus in proportion as they honoured and preached the Word of God? Or can we forget the miserable fables, the insipid traditions, the mechanical observances, the empty chaff with which for centuries the people were fed, and the artifices by which the simplicity of Christ crucified was withheld from burdened consciences and aching

hearts? And when the reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin, and their like-minded brethren in England and Scotland, magnified the Word and evangelised the poor—when they abolished both the unscriptural thought and expression of priesthood within and above the universal priesthood of believers, and declared unto all men the Scripture given and applied by the Holy Ghost as the sole and all-sufficient standard, basis, and fountain of truth—can we look on with indifference while men try to rebuild the walls of Jericho, which fell not by human might or power, not through human eloquence and philosophy, but by faith, through the trumpet-blast of the Word, which abideth and endureth for ever?

Let us continue steadfast in the doctrine of the apostles; let us follow them in faith and love. Let the Word of Christ dwell among you richly in all wisdom. Grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You need nothing else but the Word to be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. You require no other consolation in sorrow and guide in perplexity.

Take the testimonies of God as a heritage for ever, and let them be the rejoicing of your heart; let them be your counsellors, and take heed to your ways according to the Word.

Is it dark around you? Remember the Word shineth in a dark place; it is a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. Is Satan a subtle tempter? Remember Jesus used this weapon—"It is written." Is affliction overwhelming you? It is good for you to be afflicted, that you may learn God's statutes. Have you toiled the whole night, and caught nothing? Hear again the Word of God, and begin anew in faith. Is the heart slow and languid? Nothing will make it burn within you but Christ opening to you the Scriptures. The Word which we teach is all-powerful in the Spirit's hand. By the Word lepers are cleansed, and broken-hearted sinners are comforted. By the Word men walk through the sea as on dry land, and have bread in the wilderness, and their garments and shoes wax not old. By the Word men are made wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; and by the Word a godly man's steps are established, and

all that he doeth shall prosper. Let that Word be your delight and your meditation; prize it as a treasure greater than gold, and it will be sweeter to you than honey. Be a doer of the Word, and you will understand the wisdom of God, and the secret of the Lord shall be with you. Above all, sit at the feet of Jesus the Master; for He is the Lord, which teacheth us to profit, and giveth that love without which knowledge puffeth up and is unavailing. Oh to be in the school of Christ! Welcome are all who know their ignorance, who are poor in spirit. Jesus receives them willingly as His disciples, and the first word He teaches them is "Blessed," for He came to save. God sent Him to bless us, by turning every one of us from his iniquities.

Unto us, fallen children of Adam, banished children of Eve, Jesus, who is the Son of the Most High, the Wisdom of God, speaketh in the sweet gospel of peace—"Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For

whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." Oh that we may be disciples, children of the Wisdom which is from above, the ever-blessed Son of God! Amen.*

* Ps. cxix.; Matt. iv. 4; Luke v. 8, xxiv. 32; Matt. v. 3; Acts iii. 26; Prov. viii. 32.

IV.

THE NAME OF GOD.

SERMON IV.

THE NAME OF GOD.

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—MATT. xxviii. 19.

THE knowledge of God which the apostles of the Lord Jesus brought unto Jews and Gentiles, was a knowledge of life and power, through which grace and peace came into the heart, and men were made partakers of the divine nature. It was not a theory or speculation; they used no abstract words. The term "Trinity," which in the subsequent history of the Church became universal, never occurs in their addresses and epistles; but they declared the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; their disciples were brought to know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Spirit. The apostles preached Jesus, and men beheld, worshipped, and loved

the Father in His only-begotten Son, and they received from Jesus the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, by whom they were grafted into the Living Vine. God manifest in the flesh—Jesus declaring and bestowing the love of the Father—the Spirit uniting the believer with Christ—such was the knowledge and the experience of apostolic Christians.

The knowledge of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is the knowledge of a covenant relation in which we stand and live. We are not merely taught this name, we are baptized into it.* We are lifted up above the region of works and time, into the region of grace and eternity.

* The emphasis is not on "baptize," but on the perfect and full revelation of the divine name. The apostles of Christ were familiar with baptism, both as a symbol of purification and renewal (Isa. lii. 16; Ezek. xxxii. 25), and as the divinely-authorised initiation into discipleship used by John the Baptist. All the blessings and privileges of the new covenant are signed and sealed in baptism; God is declared to be our God through cleansing of the blood of Christ and renewal of the Holy Ghost. And whether received in infancy, by right of the promise and position given to believing parents, or after the intelligent reception of the truth, we possess in this ordinance confirmation and comfort for the weakness and sadness of our hearts, a seal and assurance of the faithfulness of God and the all-sufficient gifts of redemption, and the pledge of the resurrection of the body and our eternal blessedness and glory.

In the divine covenant of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, pardon, renewal, and all things which pertain to life and salvation, are given unto us.

Here is the source and the vitality of all the believer's activities and enjoyments. And to enter into this covenant, nothing is needed but to know our ignorance, guilt, and helplessness, and to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This simple confession sufficed in the estimation of the apostles, and upon it they gladly baptized men; for all who put their trust in Jesus as the Saviour are immediately within the new covenant. Jesus brings them at once unto the Father, and fills them with the Spirit. Believe in Jesus, and you are the child of the Father, the bride of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost.

But having become a disciple, having entered the school and Church of Christ, it is for us to grow in the knowledge and experience of the fulness of that grace, love, and power in which we stand. To know and to love the name of God is the first of all petitions, and the sum and substance of all blessedness. This is our life-work, and the blessedness of eternity will

be our ascribing, with adoring joy and gratitude, glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

Is it not a true and right desire to know whom we worship? Can a vague feeling of awe and reverence be called worship, or can it suffice to give peace to the conscience, and to purify and elevate our lives? Should Athenians, who erect an altar to the Unknown God, not listen gladly to the stranger of Benjamin's tribe when he declares to them Him whom they ignorantly worship? And is not Samaria's daughter, awaking from the sleep of sin and death to the thirst after the water of life, taught immediately that outside Israel men worship they know not what, for salvation—and blessed be God, salvation means the knowledge and worship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—is of the Jews.

In Judah God is known. Here He revealed Himself, and the revelation of Himself is His name. All the dealings of God with His people, His manifestations of power, goodness, and truth, the methods and marvels of His educating grace, the gifts and blessings, the

chosen priests, prophets, and kings, the laws and statutes which He gave to Israel, are but partial and successive unfoldings of His great and holy name. In all His words and acts His great object was to teach Israel to know Him, to know the name of their covenant-God. Wherever a new name of God occurs in the sacred history, it invariably marks a crisis, the commencement of a new era, the ratification and condensed summing up of previous promises and gifts, and the beginning of a new and fuller revelation of God.

Thus Israel received, and anxiously inquired into, the gradually unfolded name of the Lord. When God appeared unto Jacob, the patriarch exclaimed, "Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name!" Moses said unto Him, who manifested Himself in the burning bush, "When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers sent me unto you, and they shall say unto me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?" Where the name of God is, there He himself is present.* The new names of God are not mere changes and variations of

* Name stands for God himself, Lev. xxiv. 11, original.

titles, but new revelations of His presence—new and fuller unfoldings of His character and covenant-grace. Hence He helps and blesses by His name. His people put their trust in His name; they live and act in it, as it is written, "And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in His name, saith the Lord" (Zech. x. 12).

Jehovah is the name of God as the covenant-God of Israel. This is His proper name, which cannot be given to any beside Him (Isa. xlii. 8). It denotes not merely His eternity, but also His unchanging love and faithfulness; it declares Him to be the Saviour yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It denotes not merely that He is the living One, but that He manifests His life among a chosen people, that He visits and redeems Israel by His word and by His works. This name, Jehovah, is God's name for ever (Exod. iv. 14); it is the seal of all His commands and promises. Round this name as a centre we behold all other names and manifestations of divine power, sovereignty, wisdom, truth, and holiness; and because God is known

as Jehovah, His people can rest and rejoice in His infinite perfections.

But glorious as was the revelation of God in His name Jehovah, the name which in and by Christ Jesus is revealed to us is more glorious, of more transcendent brightness, and full of grace and truth. For in the face of Jesus Christ we behold the glory of God. Jesus is Immanuel, and in the lowly humanity of our Saviour we behold the true God and eternal life. He who dwells in light that is unapproachable, and in glory such as no man can see and live, has revealed Himself to us in His own Son; the Only-begotten, who is God of God, hath declared to us the Father. The Word was made flesh, and is the true Tabernacle, in which dwells the presence of the most High. The Son declares the name of God perfectly; in Him we worship and love the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as our covenant-God.

In was in great simplicity and gentleness that Jehovah appeared among His people, that the Dayspring from on high visited Israel. Attracted by the sweetness of His love, the perfection of His doctrine and life, the fragrance

of His holiness and mercy, the first disciples found in Him the Messiah of whom Moses and the prophets had written. They beheld the Lamb of God; they adored the King of Israel, the Son of God; they felt unable to leave Him, who had the words of eternal life. Jesus himself attracted them, and convinced their hearts that He was their Lord. In His society they felt the peace and solemnity, the holy rest and joyous communion after which their souls thirsted. They felt that Israel's God was with them. That condescending, loving, holy One who appeared unto Abraham in the tent, who spake unto Moses, and as the Angel of the Covenant, the Presence of God, went with their fathers through the wilderness, the God whose glory was beheld by Isaiah and Ezekiel —Him they beheld in Jesus, even Immanuel, the Christ, the Son of the living God; Lord and Friend, divine in His majesty, Brother in His humanity.

As in His very coming and birth the love of the Father and the power of the Holy Ghost were manifest, so divine glory shone forth with increasing brightness throughout His life. See

Him on Jordan's bank, receiving baptism from John, in order to fulfil all righteousness. Our eyes are fixed on Jesus, the centre, the Mediator, the Son of God incarnate. Above Him is the Holy Ghost, descending as a dove from heaven; and out of the excellent glory is the voice of the Father—"Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus is the Son of God—equal with the Father, and yet subordinate. In all His words and works Jesus reveals and glorifies the Father, for He is *Son;* He reveals and glorifies Himself, for He is the eternal, only-begotten, and infinite Son of *God.* No angel or prophet ever showed forth his own glory; but Jesus reveals His glory, for He is God. He who did and spoke nothing of Himself, but who was always living in and by the Father, yet speaks of Himself as the Lord, the Giver of life, of rest, of living water, the Dispenser of pardon, the Fountain of resurrection, the Sender of the Holy Ghost.

Think of such declarations as these:—"I give unto my sheep eternal life." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "Come unto

me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "I will raise him up at the last day." "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Who but God can speak thus? (John x. 28; vii. 37; Matt. xi. 28; John vi. 4; xi. 25).

Jesus in word and work showed forth His own glory. "He bore witness of Himself" (John viii. 18). Different from all other prophets, Himself was the subject, the centre of His testimony. While manifesting Himself as the Son of man, the second Adam, the perfect servant of God, the Holy One of Israel, He revealed Himself likewise as the eternal Son of God, the Lord from heaven, God over all. He speaks of Himself as the Son of man: but in this very name is implied that He is more than man, and His disciples understand His question —"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Jesus is, according to His own testimony, the Son of man, who is in heaven, the only One that came down from heaven (John iii. 13 comp. Prov. xxx.) He is a true Son of Abraham, and yet He speaks to the Jews of "*their* father Abraham," and with divine majesty declares,

"Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58). He gives thanks unto the Father for the gift of lowly-hearted disciples; but He also asserts His equality with the Father—"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 25–27). He knows He is the Christ, the Son of David; but He also knows that David, by the Spirit, called Him Lord (Matt. xxii. 42). In short, Jesus is the Son of man, the Messiah, because He is the everlasting Son of God, the Word, which was in the beginning, because He is the only-begotten, and had "glory with the Father before the world was" (John xvii. 5).

On that last evening which He spent with His disciples before His sufferings, and in His parting discourses, which, as a most precious and sacred legacy, have been recorded by the beloved disciple, Jesus, comforting and strengthening the hearts of the sorrowing apostles, summed up most clearly His previous teaching, and revealed to them most fully the name of

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Then He spoke to them plainly, and revealed unto them His glory; and this is His glory, that He is the manifestation of the Father, and that through Him the Comforter is sent to His disciples. Most explicitly He speaks to them of His Godhead, and of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. He speaks of Himself as the Son loved of the Father before the foundation of the world. He assures His disciples that the Father had sent Him, in order that in Him they might behold the Father, and that in loving Him they might be beloved of the Father. He comforts them with the promise, that in going to the Father He was not leaving them—that He, who was one with the Father, was also inseparable from His believers, that by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost the Father and Son would take up their abode in their hearts. He reveals to them the final end and consummation, when Jesus, the Son of God, who is one with the Father, would, by the Holy Ghost, dwell in His Church, and the same love wherewith the Father loved Him rest on His people. "I in them, and

Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one—the love wherewith Thou hast loved me in them, and I in them."

Jesus had thus revealed the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in this last self-manifestation. Himself as the Word, the Son, the Redeemer, the Heir must be central, for He is the Mediator. Yet He testifies of the glory of the Father as pre-eminent and ultimate, and of the power and indwelling of the Holy Ghost as essential. In the fourteenth chapter He speaks of Himself as revealing and glorifying the Father. He goes to the Father's house; He is the way to the Father; His disciples shall do greater works because He goeth unto the Father. Their prayers in His name shall be heard, in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son; the Comforter shall be given by the Father. Christ loves the Father, and manifests this love by obeying the commandment, and asks His disciples to rejoice, because through His death He was returning to the Father, "who is greater than I."

While the Father's majesty and glory, and the Father's priority in the counsel of redemp-

tion, are thus set forth in the fourteenth chapter, in the next chapter the Triune name is again declared, and here Christ, as Mediator and channel, is brought forward prominently. Christ is the Vine, and only by abiding in Him can the branches live and bring forth fruit. The disciples are to abide in Christ's love, even as His joy is to remain in them. He loved them unto death, calls them friends, has chosen and ordained them. The world hated Him, and in hating Him they hated also the Father. Christ sends the Spirit, and the Spirit and the disciples are to testify of Him.

Declaring again the Triune name, in the sixteenth chapter the Lord directs the minds of the disciples specially to the Holy Ghost. The world, which knows neither the Father nor the Son, persecutes the Church. But the Spirit convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment while He glorifies Christ, and shows unto the disciples the things which are Christ's, and the Father's.*

* "As Lavater says somewhere of these last discourses of our Lord—'If the gospels were lost, and only those chapters remained to us, we would still possess the complete, sublime, pure system of Christianity—the Father in Christ, Christ in the

Thus were the disciples prepared to understand the great and glorious commandment of the risen Saviour—"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost." And when, according to the promise, the Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost, and led them into the whole truth, they preached the whole counsel of God, and testified continually of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. In all their discourses and epistles this golden threefold cord shines with brightness, speaking peace and comfort to the heart. They bore witness that He, whom they had heard and seen with their eyes, was that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto them (1 John i. 1–3); that their communion was with the Father and the Son; that Jesus Christ was true God and Eternal Life (1 John v. 20). They always

Church, all perfected in one;' so we can assert with greater accuracy that, if all other Scripture proofs were taken from us, these chapters alone contain a simple and cogent declaration of the complete, orthodox creed—Christ one with the Father, and yet distinct from Him; the Spirit one with Him, and yet distinct from the Father and the Son."—Stier, Andeutungen i. 301.

speak of Him as Lord, Jehovah ; He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. They continually remind us that He came from above, and never speak of His poverty, humility, obedience, death, without pointing out His infinite condescension and love, which caused Him, who is Lord above all, and one with the Father, to become our Redeemer. Of His humanity and divinity they love to speak at the same time, thus revealing to us the perfection and fulness of our salvation. He, who is the son of David according to the flesh, is mightily declared to be the Son of God; He, who came of Israel, is God over all, blessed for ever ; in the exalted Jesus dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead *bodily* (Rom. i. 3, 4 ; ix. 5; Col. ii. 9). And equally clear and emphatic is their testimony that the Son was sent by the Father, and that our salvation is of the Father, and unto the Father's glory. The tone of all apostolic teaching is—Christ is the Lord, to the glory of the Father.

Only by the Holy Ghost can we call Jesus Lord, and God Father ; only the Spirit can reveal to us the things which are given to us

freely of God and in Christ. He alone brings light that we see, and power that we take hold and possess.*

As the Messiah, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, was sent by the Lord and His Spirit—as the Spirit is presented in the old covenant writings as a Person whom Israel grieved, so the apostles teach most clearly the personality of the Holy Ghost. Christ had thus most distinctly spoken of Him as another Comforter speaking, teaching, hearing, reminding, witnessing, convincing, guiding; One who, equal with the Father and the Son, takes out of the infinite and eternal Fulness, and reveals and appropriates to the disciples (John xiv.–xvi.) The Spirit, according to the apostles' teaching, speaks (Acts x. 19; xx. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 1); wills (Acts xvii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 11); testifies (Rom. viii. 16); searches (1 Cor. ii. 10); helps, intercedes, and groans (Rom. viii. 28); feels (Eph. iv. 30); by Him alone we have joy and peace in believing; by Him alone we have access to the Father, by the Lord Christ. The

* 1 Cor. xii. 3; ii. 11, 12; comp. my Lectures v. vi. vii. in "Christ Crucified."

Father and the Son are with us and in us by the indwelling of the Spirit. And thus throughout the whole apostolic testimony the name of Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost is declared. Not the names, but one name; for the Lord our God is one God. Not a single name, but a threefold name; for God is Father, Son, and Spirit.

The gospels, and especially the epistles, are an unfolding of the words of Christ—"In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The apostolic words with which, according to a true and deep instinct, our congregational worship is concluded, contain at once a distinct and practical summary of the Faith—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you" (2 Cor. xiii. 13). Thus Peter salutes believers as elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1, 2). Thus the Apostle Paul shows us the source of the unity of Christians, in the one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father (Eph. iv. 4, 6).

And thus the Church of Christ hath constantly declared the ever-blessed name, and only by declaring this name can she fulfil her mission; for here is light for the mind, peace for the conscience, love for the heart.

Speak not of obscurity, for here is God manifest in the flesh—"Zion, behold thy God." The Son of God appeared; no longer need we say, "Seek ye Jehovah," for Jehovah has come—Jesus the Son of Mary. God dwelleth no longer in darkness, and in heights unattainable to the vision of human hearts. We see Jesus the God-man; and He reveals the Father, who loved the world, who sent His Son, and who, by the death of His Son, reconciled sinners to Himself. Jesus also reveals the Spirit, who testified of Him through the prophets, who anointed Him, in whose power He lived and died, who enlightens and converts the heart, who dwells within us, and assures us of God's love, and keeps alive our faith, love, and obedience.

Jesus, by the name of God, reveals to us creation. For by Him, the Word of God, were all things made; and by the Spirit the Father's

purpose and the mediation of the Son were actually accomplished in perfection and beauty.

Jesus, by the name of God, reveals to us eternity. Not a lonely, quiescent God, as neither mind can conceive nor affection grasp, but a God in whom, from all eternity, there was fulness of life and love and blessedness, the Father loving the Son, and the Spirit knowing the depths of the Godhead.

Yet if it be said, It is mysterious, I answer: It is the mystery of light and not of obscurity; the mystery of life and motion, and not the unhomely mystery of blank abstraction and vagueness; the mystery of grandeur, but of ineffable peace and blessedness. The god of the Unitarians, Mohammedans, and of the unbelieving Synagogue, a cold, abstract unity, is a mysterious conception; still more colour—and lifeless, and without love, is that impersonal All or Nothing into which the wisest heathen nations, and many modern thinkers, resolve the thought of Deity. But our God is Life, is Love, is Blessedness: we think of Him as eternal and infinitely blessed in Himself, and

yet even in eternity loving us, and beholding us in holiness and glory. We see Him in creation, absolute, sovereign, calling forth things which were not, not out of some fabled primeval and eternal matter, but according to His own eternal thought out of the fulness of the Word, the beginning of the creation of God.

We see Him in providence; not a God enthroned in self-contained isolation, and separate from the great universe which He called forth, but upholding all things, and present in all things by that very Word of Power, by and for whom they were created, and animating, guiding, restraining, blessing through the life-giving Spirit, who is equal with the Father and the Son.

We know God separate and above the world, yet within the world; eternal, and yet cotemporaneous; infinite, yet numbering the very hairs of our head, and watching even the fall of a sparrow; God and Redeemer and Sanctifier, and in the very Godhead we behold the Man Christ Jesus—

> "God with God dominion sharing,
> And man with man his image bearing."

In Him, who is our Saviour and Friend, dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Through Him is the world sustained and ruled. The Holy Ghost is sent by Him. All heavenly influences and angels are under His control. The whole universe is one. Even inanimate matter stands no longer distant from God, who is Spirit; for in the glorified body, which was born of the Virgin Mary, and nourished by bread and water of the earth, Jesus is on the throne, one with the Father and the Spirit.

We are told that Augustine, the great teacher of the Church, was walking one morning by the sea-shore, meditating on the doctrine of the Trinity. And as he tried in vain to comprehend the mystery, he noticed a little child, holding in its hand a small sea-shell, scooping a hole in the sand, running to the waves, filling it with water, returning to the hole, and emptying it. When asked what he was doing, the child replied, "I am going to pour the sea into this hole." The thought immediately struck Augustine that this was a picture of himself;—standing on the shore of time, by the ocean of

that infinite and unfathomable Majesty, he was endeavouring to comprehend it with his finite, limited mind.

Thus the Apostle Paul, distinguished even among the chosen apostles for his wisdom, confesses that we are like children, and know only in part. The light of revelation discloses to us, only more fully, that God is infinite and incomprehensible. A God whom we can comprehend and explain could never be the object of everlasting adoration, of love and contemplation, which grows in fervour and reverence throughout the endless ages. "Who is like unto Thee?" is the exclamation of angels and saints throughout eternity. We rejoice that it is so. For the God who is high above us is near us in His marvellous condescension of self-manifestation and mercy. And this is His self-manifestation, that He is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The mystery of the Trinity is like an ocean in its eternal grandeur, in its transcendent majesty, in its unfathomable and infinite depth; but it is like the sea, when the sweet blue of heaven and the lovely light of the sun make it speak, with multitudinous smiles, peace and joy to our hearts.

To one who has been brought up in a monotheism, which proclaims only the unity of a super-mundane God, the revelation of the Trinity is like a lighthouse, which, fixed in depths unseen, and firm as a rock, sends forth the calm and hope-inspiring light of safety and love to the frail, imperilled bark on the tempestuous and dark sea. Or like a garden sweeter and fairer than Eden, or a city more noble and more beautiful than Jerusalem. For here we behold God living and loving. We rejoice in Immanuel, God manifest in the flesh. We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We behold and are gladdened by the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

* Nitzsch, in his "Essay on the Doctrine of the Trinity," says—"There is a fulness of eternal life and love in God: even before in creation by the Son, and for His own and the Son's glory and manifestation, He reveals His thoughts of infinite wisdom and power; before He shows forth His goodness unto angels and men, or discloses the counsel of mercy unto a sinful world. There is one God; but to believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is no Tritheism. This alone, on the contrary, is the Christian thinker's safeguard, not merely against Polytheism, of which there can be no more mention, but Pantheism. History proves, in the case of Mohammedans and Jews, as well as in that of like-minded children of modern enlightenment, that the

(2.) Here the conscience finds rest. Only in a triune God is perfect atonement and reconciliation. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. The Father, against whom we sinned, sent the Son to be the propitiation for our sins. When Jesus died for the guilty, God commendeth His own love. Jesus reveals to us the Father's love as the source of our salvation. He came to do the Father's will; and when He laid down His life for the sheep, He fulfilled the commandment which He had

idea of the isolated one-personed God cannot satisfy men's thirst after a full fountain of life and love, and allows them to relapse into heathenism, which deifies the All of nature. Their idea of God is so vague and dead, and apart from all life, that they long after something new that can be felt and enjoyed by heart and imagination. But we know and adore the triune God, the divine life of eternal, holy love ; our God is high above us, and yet near and present, and dwelling within us. The defects of worship are, that the idea of God is not sufficiently sublime and elevated, or not sufficiently good and holy, or not sufficiently near, omnipresent, and penetrating. All these defects are overcome, and that at once, by the revelation of the Triune name. We notice, but merely as a shadow of truth, the fact, that the number three is so deeply, and in such a variety of ways, impressed on the laws of nature and human reason, that it appears everywhere, especially in Asiatic heathenism, as symbol of perfection, and that the poets and thinkers among Hindoos, Egyptians, and Greeks, always single out three names out of their world of deities."

received of the Father. God, who is the Author of our salvation, is glorified in the death of Jesus, and in our redemption. We are brought by Jesus to the Father, in the truest, fullest, and most absolute sense.

And He who brings us to the Father is the Son. Because Jesus is the Son of God, His blood cleanseth from all sin. Because He and the Father are one, therefore the sheep for whom He died are safe, and have everlasting life. The Church was purchased with the blood of Him who is God; and when Christ, by His own blood, entered into the Holy of Holies, we are represented by Him, and complete in Him. In the Father's sight we are holy and unblameable. Because Christ is the propitiation, He is the righteous Advocate; and because He is righteous, we are righteous and accepted.

But the conscience also, and not merely the Mercy-seat, must be sprinkled with blood. The Holy Ghost, also, is essential to our peace. Through Christ, the Son of God, we are brought unto the Father; in Christ we possess the Father's pardon and love; but Christ is ours only by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is He

who creates in our souls both the sense of our need of a Saviour, and faith in His power and willingness to receive us. And it is the Spirit by whom Jesus dwells in the heart, and who testifies to us that we are the sons of God. In the covenant of grace the Holy Ghost is coequal with the Father and the Son: because the Father, through Christ, forgiveth our iniquities, and remembers our transgressions no more, therefore and thereby a new heart is given unto us, and God's Spirit is put within us. Jesus is the Advocate above; the Holy Ghost is the Comforter within. Jesus presents us before the Father as righteous; the Holy Ghost sprinkles our consciences with the blood of atonement. And thus we are at peace, because by the Spirit we lay hold on Christ, in whom we possess the love of God.

But our peace of conscience would not be true if the Spirit of God did not purge the conscience (1 Pet. i. 2). The sanctification of the Spirit is unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ. He is the Spirit of life and of holiness. He applies to the believer Christ's death unto resurrection. He makes us par-

takers of Christ; and having been reconciled by the death of God's Son, we are saved by and in His life (Rom. v. 10). By the power of the Holy Ghost we know and experience the power of the blood of Christ, by which we are brought nigh unto the Father. Without the atonement of the Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the conscience may be soothed, but cannot be purified; it may be lulled, blunted, deadened, but it cannot be quickened and purified.

And here, in this mystery of the Triune name, is love for the heart. Sweet is the word "love," and sweet beyond expression the knowledge and assurance that God is Love. Truly this is the heaven of heavens; and though the world understands not the love of God, yet is it good that the very sound of divine love should be attractive to the human heart, which can never find rest except in God. It is only when we know the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that we know that God is Love; that love is not one of His attributes merely; that love is not merely called forth in Him as the Source of creation and of His bountiful and

merciful providence: but that He *is* Love from everlasting to everlasting; that from all eternity God, who lives, loves; that in Him the one Godhead—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are united in ever-blessed communion of love.

How simple, and how full of unutterable blessedness, is the declaration of Christ—"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand!" From all eternity the Father's infinite love rested on His only-begotten Son—on Him who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His being. Here is infinite love—a boundless ocean. Infinite knows no gradation; and yet—strange contradiction! thought inconceivable! yet grasped by the heart—Jesus tells us—"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for the sheep." In that infinite and perfect love with which the Father loved the Son, Christ reveals to us a yet greater depth, more wondrous fulness, sublimer height, more ineffable sweetness. He, who is infinitely dear to the Father from all eternity, became yet more dear, more beloved, more rejoiced in; and that, which has made infinite love and joy more

infinite, as it were, was—O marvel of marvels!—occasioned by our fall, our sin and misery. It was the love of Jesus to the guilty and lost children of Eve; it was His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.

Overwhelmed with a sense of our guilt and unworthiness, and overpowered by a sense of the infinite condescension and the unspeakable sufferings and agony of Jesus, the Lord of Glory, there are moments when the soul, even in the midst of gratitude and the joy of salvation, feels a deep sorrow that the Son of God should have had to taste such bitterness. Then this is our consolation: it came out of infinite love, and has made infinite love still more infinite and blessed. We behold the reward—all-sufficient and perfectly adequate—which Jesus has received. We see it in that wonderful assurance—"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for the sheep."

We rest in the love of Jesus, who, after saving us with His precious blood, folds us in His omnipotent and tender arms, and takes us into the heavenly Sanctuary, unto the Father, unto the eternal and boundless love of Godhead.

In Jesus, one with us by the indwelling Spirit, we are sons of the Father, beloved by Him in the Only-begotten. We who are in the hand of Christ, are also in the Father's hand. We who rest in the bosom of Jesus, greater than Abraham, rest in the Father's bosom, where Christ is resting. Believing in Jesus, we are, as it were, surrounded by divine, essential, eternal love. Christ, our crucified and glorified Redeemer, is one with the Father. Nothing can therefore come between us and the Father's love in Christ. Christ the Lord, by the Holy Ghost, is one with us; hence nothing can separate us from the Saviour who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

"So near to God, so very near,
Nearer I cannot be;
For in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.

"So dear to God, so very dear,
More dear I cannot be;
The love wherewith He loves the Son,
Such is His love to me."

Let us ever hold fast with adoring hearts the faith in three unions which the Church of Christ has confessed in all ages. First, we

behold Jesus, God and man, two natures in one Person; the Lord of Glory, Immanuel, God with us. Beholding Christ, God and man, we see the Father and receive the Spirit.

Thus we learn to adore, secondly, the eternal and essential union of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Saviour reveals to us the eternal love of the Father; we know Christ as the Word by whom all things were made, as the Only-begotten, loved before the foundation of the world. We know Him also as the Heir, who shall inherit all things. Accepted in the Beloved, and seated with Him in the heavenly places, we adore the love of the Father who chose us in Christ, and look forward to the glory which the heirs of God and the joint-heirs with the Son shall possess.

And we know and adore also the Holy Ghost, one with the Father and the Son in eternity, in creation, and in redemption, by whose power and gracious indwelling the Father's love and the Saviour's grace are revealed and communicated to our souls unto eternal life.

And thus we know also, thirdly, the union, which, according to the will of the Father, sub-

sists between Christ and the Church. Of God are we in Christ: the Father is the Husbandman, the Son incarnate is the Vine, we who believe are the branches. The Father is supreme Lord and King, the Son incarnate is the Bridegroom, and we who trust in Him and love Him are the bride. We are members of the Body of which Christ is Head; and the Head of Christ is God. By the Holy Ghost Christ and the Church are one; He is in them, and they are inseparable from Him in life and death, in time and eternity.

We believe these unions, though we cannot comprehend and fathom these great and blessed mysteries. We have a knowledge and experience of them in our hearts and lives, an assurance and consolation continually flowing from these eternal depths, and we wait with calmness and hope for the bright and perfect knowledge which shall be ours when we see face to face. Through the incarnate Son of God, the man Jesus Christ, we trust with adoring gratitude and joyous contemplation in the name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; we take hold by faith of the deep and comforting mystery of our union

with Christ, and not measuring it by our feeling, find in it peace and encouragement amid all the doubts and sorrows, sins and failings of time, and in the prospect of death and eternity.

Oh to be disciples of Him, who not merely teaches, but who bestows the blessings of the new covenant, the knowledge and love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! The way is easy, the door is open; for Jesus Himself, who died for the guilty, is the Way and the Door. The end is all-glorious, union and communion with Christ—here in grace, and afterwards in glory. Eternity only will unfold how blessed they are whose God is the Lord. While we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, let us remember with humility and contrition that He by whom alone we stand in the new covenant of Trinity-blessing is Jesus, who shed His precious blood for our salvation, that thus we may continually sing the new song—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

V.

THE NAME OF GOD: THE GLORY OF THE OLD AND OF THE NEW COVENANT.

SERMON V.

THE NAME OF GOD : THE GLORY OF THE OLD AND OF THE NEW COVENANT.

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—MATT. xxviii. 19.

HE who possesses a genuine love of Scripture can bear the attempt to separate the New from the Old Testament as little as that mother who appeared before King Solomon could endure the thought of her living child being divided by the sword into two. "In nowise slay it!" was her eager exclamation. To divide is to slay. And thus is it with the living child of God's Spirit—the Scripture. It is one. The same God, who hath spoken in those last days by the Son, spake at sundry times and in divers manners by the prophets unto the fathers. The foundation of the temple of revelation is Moses; the superstructure, the prophets, evan-

gelists, and apostles; Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone.

Two portions constitute the sacred record—the word of promise and preparation, and the word of fulfilment. But the one Spirit which inspired, also pervades them. They are not merely indissolubly connected—they not merely dwell together in harmony; but such is their mutual impenetration, that the one cannot live without the other. These two witnesses are one. "When I listen to the accordant voice of all the holy prophets and the apostles of our Lord and Saviour, methinks I stand at Jerusalem, at our Lord's triumphant entry, and hear the multitudes of those who go before, and of those who follow after, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord to save."

We cannot truly understand the fulfilment, and rejoice in that which is perfect, without knowing the promise, and the gradual and fragmentary preparation of the great redemption. As Israel, so do we all need to be taught by the law the nature of holiness, and the guilt and condemnation of sin. Jesus is the

Christ—this is the sum of saving knowledge. But what is meant by Messiah is to be learned only from the prophets.

Hence, to understand the gospels, we must know the dealings of God with His people from Abraham to David, and to the Babylonish captivity (Matt. i.)—we must know the Scripture which must needs be fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, comprise the whole scheme of redemption; but the risen Saviour Himself declares the whole counsel of God out of Moses and the prophets. Law and gospel, Adam and Christ, works and grace, nature and the Holy Ghost, are the two great contrasts which evangelical teaching illustrates; but in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians the ancient Scripture forms throughout the basis and starting-point of instruction. And the great and peculiar glory of the new covenant dispensation is seen by the light of the old. Is not the Epistle to the Hebrews an exposition of this comparison and contrast; unfolding the glory of Christ, the true Melchisedec, and the eternal High Priest? It is in order to under-

stand, and to accept the fulness of gospel blessings, that we must know Moses and the prophets. Thus, in searching the Scriptures to which the Saviour referred, we enter on an essential and most salutary study; for without the knowledge of these sacred writings we do not know the height and depth, and breadth and length, of that full salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

The name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is revealed by the Lord Jesus and in the apostolic writings with a clearness, simplicity, and fulness, which could not exist before the incarnation of the Son of God. But the same God, who now speaks to us by His Son, spake to the fathers by the prophets; and Israel knew the true and living God, Jehovah, and the mystery of His threefold name was gradually revealed unto them.

Man lost the knowledge of God through sin. Knowing the existence of God, men did not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful. Through sin they fell into ignorance and superstition. Traces of the primeval revelation, vague and confused reminiscences, distorted and corrupt traditions of truth once known, are among the

nations. They had some knowledge of divine rule and Paternal power; some presentiment of divine Sonship, as the centurion exclaimed at the cross—"Surely this Man was the Son of God;" some perception that all great and beautiful things owed their existence to a supernatural inspiration and celestial influence. The heathen nations, in their slumber of sin and worldliness, were not unvisited by dreams of higher and better things. But the interpretation of the dreams is only through Joseph and Daniel of the chosen race. God revealed Himself to Israel. The truths, which appear as so simple, were never discovered by man:—"In the beginning God created heaven and earth." "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God!" "Thou shalt not make thyself any image to worship it." "The Lord is gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth." "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!" "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and all thy strength, and all thy soul." These are divine words; light which was sent from the heavenly Sanctuary to fallen man on earth; the revelation of the God of salvation, who in His

infinite love visited and redeemed His people. God revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Moses and the children of Israel. And it is owing to this gracious manifestation that the darkness and ignorance of heathenism are dispelled. This God of Scripture is indeed different from the God of the philosophers.* Here is no vague, abstract, impersonal power, but God is the God in covenant relation with His people; they know His name, they possess His law, they enjoy His guidance and protection. He is their God, and they are beloved by Him. And yet they know Him as the God who created heaven and earth, to whom belong all angels above and nations below, whom no man hath seen at any time, and whom no finite mind can fathom. While Israel knows God as their God,

* The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not the God of the philosophers.—PASCAL. "To speak with reverence, He whom no man hath seen at any time, nor can see, has condescended to become an historical Personage. All attempts to eliminate His being and operation from the scriptural history of the Jewish people must eternally prove nugatory; the natural and supernatural are so closely interwoven, and so intimately pervade each other, that it is utterly impossible to remove Jehovah and leave the undoubted facts of Israel's history explicable at all."—Dr J. DUNCAN.

while they call Him by His name, they also know that God is incomprehensible, unsearchable; they stand in awe before Him, who is eternal, infinite, and awful in majesty and glory. He meets with them in the tabernacle and in the temple, and yet they know that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. He reveals Himself, and yet they say, "Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." He manifests Himself in signs and wonders, and He reminds them, "Thou hast not beheld any likeness or similitude." Where else do we find such a conception? So infinite, and yet so definite and personal; so vast and comprehensive, and yet so national and familiar; so spiritual, and yet so real; so majestic and awful, and yet so merciful and loving. This God, holy, and yet gracious; eternal and infinite, and yet guiding His people from day to day, ordering their very steps, and regulating their life down to the detail of food and dress; unsearchable, yet their light, and the Hearer of their prayers; self-subsistent and blessed in Himself, and yet yearning after their love and fellowship—this God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the true

and living God, and as He saith Himself, "There is no other; I know not any." Do not confuse this God with what the world calls God. Outside Israel God is anonymous; in Israel He is Jehovah, in the Church He is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is in God's school that little children are made wise, and wise men become little children, and know and worship God.

In the divine revelation to Israel from Abraham to the Exodus, and from Moses to the last prophets, we can trace the following lines of education, which all converge in the advent of the Lord Jesus, and in His full revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I. Scripture teaches us that no man can see God, and Scripture speaks at the same time of God appearing. In paradise the voice of Jehovah (God) was heard walking in the garden in the cool of day. Unto the Fathers the Lord appeared as the angel or messenger of the covenant. He appears first unto Hagar, speaks unto her as the Lord, who is almighty, and is called Lord by her and by the sacred historian.*

* Gen. xvi. 10, 13 : When the angel of the Lord said unto

When God appeared unto Abraham, only one of the three men whom he received in his tent is called Lord.* The angel who stayed the hand of Abraham when he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac, speaks of himself as Jehovah, and confirms the promise with his oath.† The angel who appears unto Jacob in a dream calls himself the God who appeared unto him in Bethel,‡ and the dying patriarch spoke of God and of the angel who redeemed him from all evil.§ This was He with whom

Hagar, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude," does He not announce Himself as the Lord, the Author of life and Creator of spirits? Here we find, in the 13th verse, that the historian calls Him "The Lord, who spake unto her," and Hagar called His name, "Thou, God, seest me."

* Gen. xviii. 20–33—"And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great . . . I will go down now. . . . If I find in Sodom fifty righteous men, I will spare all the place for their sakes. . . . And the Lord went His way."

† Gen. xxii. 11–17—"And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord . . . that in blessing I will bless thee," &c.

‡ Gen. xxxi. 11-13—"And the angel of the Lord spake unto me in a dream, . . . I am the God of Bethel."

§ Gen. xlviii. 15, 16—"The God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil," &c.

Jacob wrestled, and of whom he said afterwards, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."* Thus Hosea calls him Angel and God.†

This was the angel of Jehovah who appeared unto Moses on Mount Horeb, and spoke of Himself as Lord, and is called by Moses Lord.‡ The messenger of Jehovah is none else than Jehovah manifest, the angel in whom is God's name, the presence and countenance of God. He went with Israel through the wilderness.§

* Gen. xxxii. 30—"Peniel, I have seen God face to face."

† Hos. xii. 3-5—"Jacob, . . . by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; even the Lord God of Hosts; the Lord is his memorial."

‡ Exod. iii. 6, 14, 15, and iv. 5: The angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses, and calls himself, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses, in replying, calls him Lord, and Moses, as the historian, also designates him as Lord.

§ Exod. xxiii. 20, 21: In this remarkable passage God declares of the angel, "My name is in him." Most clearly is the union between God and the angel revealed in such expressions, "If thou shalt indeed obey *His* voice, and do all that *I* speak." Is not this the same in existence which the incarnate Son describes when He says, "The Father is in me, and I in Him; the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (John x. 38, xiv. 16). If possible, still more explicit is Exod.

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. lxiii.) Truly the Rock that followed them was Christ (1 Cor. x. 3).

Joshua beheld Him on the eve of battle, and worshipped before the Captain of the host of the Lord (Joshua v. 13–15). The same God-manifest appeared unto Manoah, declared His name to be Pele, wonderful, and Manoah knew he had seen the Lord (Judges xiii.; specially 10, 22). The evangelist John teaches us that it was Christ's glory which Isaiah beheld,* when

xxxiii., where the angel who had been promised (Exod. xxxii. 34) is called by God, "My presence—פָּנַי—my countenance;" or, as Isaiah, in obvious reference to this chapter, says, "The angel of His countenance," as the Apostle Paul speaks of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (ἐν προσώπῳ Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ) (2 Cor. iv. 6).

* "Isaiah had, in his inmost being, in some way unimaginable to us who have not beheld it, seen the Holy Trinity in their unity of essence, and that in the person of the Son, who said of Himself, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' It was a human form which he beheld sitting enthroned as the Judge, and receiving the worship of the glowing love of the seraphim. He had seen Him in His own glory and the glory of the Father, transfiguring the likeness of that human form, which is now with the Father, the Light of heaven, which amid the un-

in the year of King Uzziah's death he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple (Isa. vi. ; John xii. 41).

The testimony of Scripture concerning God revealing Himself in the angel, who is also God, appears for the last time most emphatically in the concluding books of the prophets.

Thus also Ezekiel beheld the manifestation of God. And above the firmament, that was over their heads—was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man upon it. In the Book of Malachi we read—"The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts" (iii. 1). How distinct is this designation. He is the Messiah, sought and desired with vehement affection by Israel. He is the Mediator of the covenant

created light, which God is, illumines heaven also with an uncreated light (as St John says, 'The Lamb is the Light thereof') because in Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily."—Pusey on Isaiah vi., Oxford Lectures, 1860.

between God and His people. He is both Messenger and Lord, even as Jesus constantly spoke of Himself as *sent* by the Father. And this divine Messenger or Angel had a forerunner—"Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." This was fulfilled in John the Baptist, as Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, truly expounds the prophecy of Malachi—"And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go *before the face of the Lord* to prepare His ways" (Luke i. 76). Israel knew God as Jehovah revealing Himself, the Messenger or Angel, sent by God and one with God, His representative, face, and image; in whom divine glory was manifest, and to whom divine adoration is due.*

* The passages of Scripture seem so very clear and strong, especially if viewed in connection, and considered in the light of the gospels and epistles, that it seems strange that in the Church of Christ there should have been any difference of opinion as to the identity of the Angel with the Word or Son of God. Is it conceivable, or in harmony with Scripture, that divine names, honours, and functions should be attributed to a created being, however exalted? No truth is perhaps so often and so solemnly stated and impressed by Moses and the prophets as the infinite distance between God and the creature; the jealousy of Jehovah, not to give His glory to another: and

Blessed are we who know more clearly and fully the mystery of godliness ; who know the name of Jesus, who is before Abraham was, whose glory was beheld by Isaiah, who was the Rock that followed Israel in the wilderness—the Lord, as the apostles constantly and emphatically call Him, who is one with the Father, and in whom is fulfilled the petition and desire of all true Israelites—"Show us the Father."

Thus Israel knew not merely God the Creator, infinite and incomprehensible—Him whom no

the supposition of a created angel, appointed to be a representative manifestation of God, is surely a very dangerous one, and may we not say, one which would be rejected by a simple mind which had received the fundamental truths of the Word of God. When John, the beloved disciple, fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed him these things, he said unto him, "See thou do it not." The Angel of the Covenant accepts worship : created angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. None of them can be called Lord. The Mediator between God and man—this seems the central truth to which all prophetic and apostolic teaching converges—is the Lord, uncreated, eternal, infinite, appointed from all eternity, whose goings forth are of old, finally made manifest, when the Word was made flesh, the man Christ Jesus. It was, however, only gradually that Israel connected the thought of the revealing God with the Messiah. But that they had come to this knowledge is evident ; for example, from Mal. iii. 1.

man hath seen at any time, or can see,*—but they knew Jehovah as their God, who had chosen and revealed Himself to the Fathers, who had remembered the afflictions of His people in Egypt, who had delivered them out of bondage by a strong hand and a mighty arm, who was their King, and who manifested Himself among them, that they might love, worship, and serve Him.

II. But while God came thus nigh unto them, He revealed the infinite distance which separated between Him and the sinful nation. God is holy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; justice and truth are the pillars of His throne. But Israel is sinful and guilty. Yet God dwells among them. When He loved the people, He came with a fiery law in His right hand. And yet Israel hopes in the Lord, for with Him is plenteous redemption. For they knew that God, the holy and just Lawgiver, was also God the Redeemer, the

* Compare John i. 18—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten God (*μονογενὴς θεός*, "Tregelles' New Test."), who is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him."

covenant-God, who saith—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins." It was God who clothed Adam and Eve after their disobedience; it was Jehovah who, according to the testimony of the prophets, clothes His people with the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness. This pardoning and restoring Jehovah is what in the language of fulfilment is called God in Christ; or the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour. And while the source of forgiveness can only be in God, against whom sin is committed, there runs throughout Scripture a line of predictions in which an atoning and justifying Mediator is promised, who is divine, and who is called the Lord our Righteousness. When Moses interceded in behalf of Israel, the Lord said unto Moses, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exod. xxxii. 33). In the 49th Psalm we are reminded that no man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.* When the prophets, therefore, speak of one who is

* Ps. xlix. 7.

perfectly sinless and holy, who is wounded for our transgressions, and upon whom the Lord hath laid the iniquities of us all—whose soul shall be made an offering for sin, and who shall justify many by His knowledge, for He shall bear their iniquities—it is evident that this suffering and atoning, this justifying and saving Mediator is one with God; it is a divine One who says, "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." The Redeemer is God, and yet distinguished from God; He is God of God, the Lord whom we worship, as the incarnate Son was called Jesus, because He saves His people from their sins.

And as God forgives, so God renews and sanctifies. Unto Israel pertaineth the glory, the presence, and the manifestation of the Lord. Between the cherubim, and above the mercy-seat, the glory of God appeared. It filled the temple. This is fulfilled when the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we

beheld the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.

But the times of fulfilment are predicted in a more distinct manner: a time is coming when Jehovah shall be in the hearts of His people, when His Spirit shall be poured out, when the Holy Ghost shall descend and renew the heart, and all shall be taught of God. For the pardon of sin and the renewal of the heart; the forgiveness of transgression and the entrance into the presence of the Most High; the redemption by righteousness or atonement, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost—were gifts always combined in the promises of God. Salvation embraces not merely the blotting out of our transgressions, but the slaying of the enmity, the circumcision of the heart. The Messiah and the Spirit are continually placed together before Israel. This is the blessing of the new covenant, that God will put His Spirit within them, and give them a new heart; that God himself shall dwell within them, and that they shall be all taught of God. As there is no other Saviour but Jehovah, so there is no other quickening, renewing, and comforting Spirit but the

Holy Ghost. This was symbolised by the holy anointing, like to which none might be made on pain of death. The priests and prophets and kings which were anointed with that holy unction were only types (might we say, temporary and imperfect instalments and anticipations?) of that perfect Revealer, Atoner, Ruler, who is anointed with the Holy Ghost, who possesses the Spirit in His sevenfold plenitude, in whom the Spirit has His perfect abode, and through whom the Spirit would be given to God's people to dwell in them. Thus, as the forgiving Jehovah sent Jehovah the Atoner, the Holy Ghost is the third revelation of "I am Jehovah, which sanctify you" (Ezek. i. 26).

A just God and a Saviour, a holy God and a sanctifying Spirit, were manifested unto Israel, or in other words, the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

III. These two lines of prophecy are combined in the hope of Jehovah's rending the heavens, and coming down to redeem and glorify Israel. The coming of the Lord God is the

theme of Psalms and Prophets. God is expected to establish His throne, and to be King over all the earth—Then shall He sit upon the throne of His holiness, and rule over all nations. Israel shall rejoice, and serve Him in truth and love; all peoples shall walk in the light of Jacob. Then the daughters of Judah and all the world shall say, This God is our God for ever and ever. He maketh wars to cease, and the word of the Lord goes forth from Jerusalem to all ends of the earth. What is this expectation of Jehovah seen, beloved, ruling on a restored earth, else but the expectation of the Lord Jesus, who in the Book of Revelation calls Himself Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the Lord which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty? The invisible God manifest, the Holy God among a forgiven and renewed people—such is the hope of Israel.

IV. I must now direct your attention to another apparently opposite line of prediction. It does not descend from heaven earthwards, but from earth heavenwards. Its starting-

point is not the throne of holiness, but the earth under a curse, and the woman, who was first in the transgression. You know what series of promises I allude to. The seed of the woman, who is to bruise the serpent's head; the seed of Abraham, the only and beloved son of promise, type in the miraculous beginning of his existence, as well as in his obedience unto death; the son of Judah, called Shiloh; the son of David, who is to rule over the house of Jacob for ever, king and shepherd in righteousness, peace, and love; lastly, the servant Israel, the true and perfect and spirit-filled Israel and servant of God, in whom His whole character is revealed, and all His will fulfilled. Now the Seed, the Son, the David, the Servant, the Israel, is the Redeemer, the Light of the nations, the Restorer and glory of His people. And as He is man, and born of the virgin-daughter of Zion, He is also God. Divine names and attributes and works are ascribed to Him. He is called God with us, the mighty God, Jehovah our Righteousness. He is called Jehovah—"The voice that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the *Lord*, make straight in

the desert a highway for our God." He is born in Bethlehem Ephratah, but His goings forth are of old, even from everlasting. He is David's Son, and David in the spirit calls Him Lord. He is the Messenger of the covenant, in whom Israel delights, and yet He is called the Lord whom ye seek.

This Anointed is the Son of God, whose enemies must perish, while all they that trust in Him are blessed (and yet "cursed is he who trusteth in man"). This branch out of the root of Jesse is Lord, who shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips slay the wicked (Isa. xi., comp. 2 Thess. ii. 2; Rev. i. 16). Isaiah describes Him, not merely as the servant of Jehovah, perfect in His obedience; but He presents Him also as the divine mediating Lord, the salvation and glory of His people, the full manifestation and infinite delight of God. Zechariah, whom Luther calls *Ausbund der Propheten*, testifies that the Shepherd who is smitten and pierced is none other than the Lord, who sends the Spirit, the Man who is my Equal; the branch is

priest and king, king of Zion, and of the whole world, one with God in majesty and glory (Isa. xl.–lxvi., and Zech. *passim*).

Thus Israel was taught that the Son of David, the Messiah, was God manifest in the flesh; Revealer of the Father and the Lord, who can baptize with the Holy Ghost. Does not the Messianic prophecy declare the name of the triune God?

V. This mysterious God-man is seen in heaven and coming down from heaven. He is evidently one with the Jehovah, of whom I spoke before, coming to establish His kingdom, and reveal His glory on earth. David beholds Him (Ps. cx. 1), who is his Son, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The prophet Zechariah beholds the divine Lord pouring upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications (Zech. xii. 10); and He who descended from heaven is none other but He who ascended, even He who was pierced by His brethren, the Man whom Jehovah calls

His equal.* Daniel beholds the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven, and there was given to Him an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and a kingdom that shall not be destroyed (Dan. vii. 13, 14). Ezekiel prophesies that David, God's servant, shall be king over His people, and they all shall have one Shepherd. Then God's tabernacle shall be with them—"Yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my tabernacle shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezek. xxxvii. 24–28).

Mysterious predictions! The Lord who descends from God's throne in glory, and with the

* A Jewish commentator on Zechariah has the following interesting remarks, in which truth is strangely mixed with error:—"I will do yet a third thing, and that is, they shall look unto me; for they shall lift up their eyes unto me in perfect repentance, when they see Him whom they pierced, that is, Messiah, the Son of Joseph; for our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have said that He will take upon Himself all the guilt of Israel, and shall then be slain in the war to make an atonement, in such a manner, that it shall be accounted as if Israel had pierced Him, for on account of their sin He has died, and therefore, in order that it may be reckoned to them as a perfect atonement, they will repent and look to the blessed One, saying, There is none beside Him to forgive those who mourned on account of Him, who died for their sin."—*Alshech, quoted by M'Caul.*

clouds of heaven, to judge the earth, to pour out the Holy Ghost on Israel, to receive an everlasting kingdom, to sanctify the chosen people, and to rule over the whole world, is the Son of man, the Son of David, the Servant of God, the Shepherd who was smitten, whose hands were pierced. This is He of whom it is written in the Book of Revelation—"Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him!" It is Jesus who is the Son of man, who is also "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

VI. Hitherto we have considered the historical manifestations of God in Israel, and the promises of the future, final manifestations of God. But the thought of Israel was led also beyond history and creation into the region of eternity; and the mystery of the Trinity, which is fully revealed in the apostolic writings, especially of John and Paul, is foreshadowed in the teaching of the Book of Proverbs. God, who reveals Himself as triune, *is* triune—such has been the confession of the Church in all

ages. And Israel before the Advent possessed some knowledge of the eternal Word and Spirit; for who can fail to recognise the identity of the Wisdom spoken of by Solomon in the Book of Proverbs, and the Word, who the beloved disciple teaches us was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God, by whom all things were made, who is the beginning of the creation of God. This Wisdom is not a personification of a divine attribute. Attributes and actions are ascribed to her: she invites the simple to make a covenant with her, she promises to pour out "my spirit," and she announces death as the portion of all who do not yield themselves in faith and obedience to her voice. This Wisdom, which appears among men, and dwells especially in Israel, is eternal—with God in the beginning of His way, before His works of old, from everlasting—before the earth was and the heavens were brought forth. There are no expressions more emphatic or explicit to describe the premundane, eternal character of the Word. And this eternal Wisdom was with God—object of His contemplation, love, and delight—His equal in glory. Such

language describes in a variety of ways what is impossible for human language to describe adequately, even the transcendent mystery of eternal generation. Wisdom is set up from everlasting, brought forth; or, as the Church expressed it, God of God, begotten, not made; beyond and above all creation; to be distinguished from God, and yet worshipped in the Godhead. When Solomon says that God possessed wisdom in the beginning of His way, does he not bring before us the beginning which is before creation; even as the Apostle Paul, speaking of the Son of God, by whom all things were created, says, He is before all things, and again, He is the beginning (ἀρχή) (Col. i. 17, 18). And as the Lord calls Himself, "The beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14).

Bearing in mind the *filial hypostatic* character of Wisdom, we understand the remarkable passage in chap. xxx.—"Who hath ascended up into heaven and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name,

and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?"

VII. We may now consider passages in which we think reference is made to the plurality in the ever-blessed Trinity, and which will not appear as isolated, but inwoven into the whole history of Israel, and harmonious with all the divine teaching.

In the very commencement of Genesis we are taught that God, who created all things, created all things by the Word, and that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. The Word and the Spirit are constantly combined—"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. xxxiii. 6). And in like manner the countenance, or presence, and the Spirit—"Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (Ps. li. 11). "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" (Ps. cxxxix. 7).

The prophet Isaiah gives a compendious summary of the divine gracious dealings with

Israel (Isa. lxiii.); and in this beautiful and sublime prayer he speaks of the Lord, of the Angel of His presence, and of the Spirit. Throughout the prophecy of this evangelist of the old covenant, the Servant of God, the Redeemer, who is divine, is represented as sent by God, and anointed with the Holy Ghost—"From the time that it was, there am I, and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent me."*

Most important and fundamental is the blessing with which, according to God's commandment, Aaron blessed the people. This benediction, given by inspiration, contained the sum and substance of divine teaching. The whole revelation of the covenant-God, and the fulness of covenant-blessing, are here summed up, not by man, but by God himself. The question, therefore, is not what and how much Moses and the people could have understood or known of the mystery. Out of this divine revelation, so full and glorious, so august and consoling, they continually derived, by the aid of the Spirit, light and peace, inquiring into its depths,

* Isa. xlviii. 16; compare Stier on this important passage *Jesaias nicht Pseudojesaias.*

and meditating on its vast disclosures, even as we, who have received the fuller and clearer revelation, remain constantly learners, and know only in part.

That the benediction consists of three co-ordinate parts, that the name of the Lord is mentioned three times, is surely significant. But the threefold blessing corresponds most fully with the threefold manifestation of God, with the triune name. God the Father is the Author and Source of all blessing—"He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places" (Eph. i. 3). He it is by whom His people are kept—"The Lord is thy Keeper" (Ps. cxxi. 5; 1 Pet. i. 5), kept by the power of God. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee." God the Son is the Face of God shining upon us; in Him the Father receives us graciously—"God was in Christ, reconciling the world." This is the second benediction—"The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." The Father's love and the grace of the Lord are brought unto us by the Holy Ghost, and when they are received by Him, the result is peace. This is the third blessing—crown and consum-

mation of the two—"The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."*

This blessing, so venerable, so holy, so glorious, of which both the substance and the outward expression, the pearl and the casket have God for their Author, was no doubt unto thousands of God-fearing Israels a compendium of theology, as well as a cordial in days of sorrow and conflict. And what they saw dimly was declared fully by Him who is above Aaron, by the great High Priest, even the Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, when He commanded His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Isaiah the prophet beheld the glory of Christ, and heard the song of praise which ascends from the seraphim to the throne of God. As in the heavenly Sanctuary the Lord is called holy, so the Old Testament evangelist speaks continually in his prophecy of the "Holy One of Israel."† And as Isaiah heard the

* Comp. John xx. 21, 22; Rom. xiv. 17; Luke ii. 14.

† It forms, Delitzsch says, an essential part of Isaiah's distinctive prophetic signature. The only other passages in which the word occurs are three times in the Psalms and twice in

trisagion of the seraphim, which doubtless, like that of the cherubim (in Rev. iv. 8), referred to the ever-adorable Trinity, so the whole prophecy, which by divine inspiration was given to Israel, reflected, although in broken rays, the glory of that perfect revelation which in Jesus has been vouchsafed to the Church.

Children of God, who live in the days of fulfilment, and in the dispensation of the Spirit, who know the name of Jesus, the incarnate Son of the Father, and who by the Holy Ghost are members of the Body of which the exalted Christ in heaven is Head and Lord, do we know and use the blessings of the new, the everlasting covenant, of which baptism is the sign and seal, and in which God is our God, in time and eternity?

First, as to *worship*. Israel worshipped the only true and living God. They knew Him, the Lord who had revealed Himself to their fathers, and redeemed them out of Egypt.

Jeremiah, and that not without an allusion to Isaiah. In Isaiah it occurs twenty-nine times.

They knew His name in many manifestations; His character and His purposes of grace were revealed unto them at sundry times and in divers manners. They knew the way of access unto God in the sacrifices and offerings, the Sabbaths and festivals, their priests and Levites. God taught them to approach Him, and to receive from Him forgiveness of sin and purification of heart. The Holy Ghost also taught them in their souls, and the recorded prayers and thanksgivings of the saints before the Advent are most precious evidences that Israel worshipped in the same Spirit in which we now draw near to the throne of grace. Broken-hearted contrition for sin, self-loathing and self-condemnation in God's sight, hope in His mercy, and exclusive reliance on His righteousness and covenant-promise, joy in His salvation, and desire for the manifestation of divine glory on earth—all these features of the renewed soul are most distinctly and beautifully expressed in the Psalms of David and the prayers of the prophets.

And yet, great as is the glory of the Old Testament worship, greater is the glory of the New

Testament worship. For then the way into the Holiest of all was not yet manifest; whereas now Christ by His own blood has entered in once into the Holy place (Heb. ix. 8–14). Then Israel, although taught and guided by the Spirit, had not received the Holy Ghost as we receive the Spirit from our glorified Saviour, Jesus Christ (John vii. 39). The incarnation of the Son, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, have brought unto us fulness and liberty of worship which the Old Testament saints did not enjoy.

Whereas the world worship they know not what, approaching God without the mediation of His Son, and offering up petitions according to the thoughts and desires of an unrenewed heart, the Church worships the God of Israel in the brightness, peace, and power of His perfect self-manifestation.*

"It is impossible to separate true spiritual worship and communion from the perfect offering of Christ to God. When the Holy Spirit leads us into real spiritual worship, it leads us into communion with God, into the

* Spirituality is not so much a quality inherent in the worshipper, it is the reflection of the object worshipped.

presence of God, and then, necessarily, all the infinite acceptability to Him of the offering of Christ is present to our spirit; the acceptance of that sweet savour is that in which we go to Him. We are associated with it, it forms an integral and necessary part of our communion and worship. We cannot be in the presence of God in communion without finding there the perfect favour of God in which an offered Jesus is. It is, indeed, the ground of our acceptance, as well as of our communion."*

In Jesus, and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, we call upon the *Father*. The Son has declared Him. We adore Him, who, from all eternity, is the Father of our Lord; we trust and love Him, who in Christ has given unto us the adoption of sons. The Father's character was fully revealed by Jesus; He declared His name. The coming of Jesus, His sufferings and His death, glorified the Father, and showed forth His boundless love to sinners. The Father sent Him, the Father spared Him not, but gave Him up to die; and as the Father's love is the eternal source of our salvation, so

* "On Worship," by J. N. D.

the knowledge and love of the Father is the end of all the words and works of Jesus.

By His death and resurrection the Saviour became the firstborn among many brethren; and through the Holy Ghost we receive the filial spirit, so that we draw near to God, "as dear children to their dear father." * The glory of the Father is the end of the way, which is Jesus. When Jesus speaks of His death for our salvation, He reveals unto us the Father's love; when He draws us unto Himself, He draws us unto the Father. The more we love Christ, and rejoice in Him as our Lord and Saviour, the more do we glorify the Father (Phil. ii. 11), who spared not the Son, but gave Him up unto death, and exalted Him the Head of the Church. We praise and magnify the Father; for in Christ we behold the Father's glory, we are blessed with the Father's love.

And not merely has Christ revealed to us the Father, and reconciled us with God, but by virtue of our regeneration, our union with the Only-begotten, we have become in reality, in nature, so to say, the children of God, and as

* Luther's Catechism.

the brethren of Christ, as the new-born children, we say, Abba.

As we worship the Father, we call also Jesus Lord. We worship Christ. This is a mystery which the world cannot understand. They know not that Jesus is the Lord of glory. But those into whose hearts God hath shined, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. ii. 8; 2 Cor. ii. 4, 6) adore Jesus in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, the Son, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His being. And as Israel knew the divine dignity of the messenger of God, the children of God worship Jesus, God manifest in the flesh. The wise men from the East worshipped the Child, the new-born King of the Jews, and brought to Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh, for they knew that He was Lord (Matt. ii.) The blind man whose eyes Jesus opened believed in the Son of God, and worshipped Him (John ix. 35–38). Thomas fell down when he beheld the merciful and loving Saviour, and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God" (John xx. 26–29).

All the apostles worshipped Him when they saw Him ascending into heaven (Luke xxiv. 52); and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and praised and blessed God, because Jesus, their Saviour, was their almighty and adorable Lord. All Christians in the primitive church worshipped Jesus. Thus Ananias, speaking to the Lord Jesus, describes believers as the saints of Jesus, who call upon His name (Acts ix. 14). The Church of God, which was at Corinth, and all the churches, according to the testimony of the Apostle Paul, called upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. i. 2).

As all saints on earth worship Christ, so all the saints in heaven and all angels. The four living beings and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb. John the evangelist heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living beings and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory and blessing."

While we adore Jesus, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, we are filled with sweetest joy and confidence when we remember His humanity. He is a merciful and compassionate High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmity. He remembers His sufferings and temptations on earth. He, who became like us in all things, sin excepted, is even now not ashamed to call us "brethren," and He still possesses all the sympathy and tenderness which He manifested on earth, and which His experiences here below, even to His death on the cross, drew forth and perfected. Thus we worship not merely with reverence and awe, but with great joy and boldness, with that feeling of perfect confidence which enables us to "say all," * to pour out our hearts before Him, and to confide all our sorrows and fears to One who still saith to us, "I call you friends." As He is the only Son of God, so is He the only Son of man, the only one who knows all that is in man, and in whom every one can find rest and light, help and guidance, perfect sympathy, and all-sufficient love.

* παῤῥήσια.

Calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus, thus our Christian life commences; so may it terminate, as the first martyr beheld the Son of man at the right hand of God, and invoked, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and again, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

And we adore also the Holy Ghost, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who searcheth the deep things of God, and by whom the Father and the Son dwell in our hearts.

The glory of God is revealed to us in eternal love; in the Lamb that was slain and is now enthroned, the counsel of God is made manifest. We worship God, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, the God of our salvation. The more we behold of His adorable greatness, the nearer are we brought to Him in faith and childlike confidence; the more He manifests to us the marvels of His power and the sweetness of His love, the more overwhelmed are we with the sense of His infinite majesty, and the unsearchable depth of His wisdom and power. And this is the blessedness of heaven, in which

alone the soul's thirst can be satisfied—adoration and love.

In the union and interpenetration of these two elements is eternal blessedness. An adoration without love; a sense of divine majesty, power, and truth without trust, gratitude, joy, affection, without the knowledge that God is our God, is not true adoration, for it does not reach the acknowledgment of God as He is, it does not attain to the central light—God is Love. A feeling of love and peace, without a sense of the awful majesty and holiness of the Most High, is not true spirit-born love; for only by the blood of Christ are we brought nigh unto the Father. In Christ Jesus we behold God, and worship. His *love* is the full manifestation of His *glory*. The more we trust, the more we are filled with awe; the nearer we approach, the higher do we behold the Lord—God above all, blessed for ever.

We worship the true God, and we worship God in spirit and truth. We have received the Spirit of Christ as a Spirit of grace and supplication. The Spirit himself helpeth our infirmities in prayer. We pray in the Holy

Ghost. And it is thus that through the mediation of Christ we draw near unto the Father. For not merely are we brought nigh by the blood of Christ, and accepted in Him, and not merely is the great High Priest ever interceding for us, and presenting to the Father our praise and our petitions, but by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost we possess the mind of Christ, and pray in Christ's name, asking the blessings which Christ the Lord has purchased for us, and which His love desires us to obtain.* Thus are all things of God; thus of our worship the source and end, the way and strength, the light and joy, are in the ever-blessed Persons of the Godhead.

* "We are one with Christ, He lives in us; by the Spirit we are joined unto the Lord, and the Spirit teaches us to pray in His name; for what is the cry of the Spirit? He utters the same prayer as Jesus had taught—'Abba, Father.' The Spirit of Christ creates within us the filial Spirit. He conforms us unto Christ, so that we seek God's glory, are jealous for His honour, long for His kingdom, and desire not to do our own will, but His. He works in us that calm, believing rest in God, who supplies our daily wants, and delivers us from the feverish anxiety and timorous thought of the future. He makes us forgiving, patient, and gentle toward all men, and dreading and hating nothing but temptation and evil. *Or, in other words, He prays and fulfils in us the Lord's Prayer.*"—My Lectures on "The Lord's Prayer," p. 92.

Secondly, Do we remember the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as the foundation of our Christian knowledge and experience? Do we rest in the love of the Father, which is ours by the grace of His only Son? Do we call Jesus Saviour with the appropriating faith which the Holy Ghost gives? Do we live in the bright, clear sunshine of the day which in Christ has come unto us? Do we see the fatherly heart of God, which in Christ Jesus He has revealed to us? Do we trace and transfer to the Father all the features of condescending love, pity, and tenderness which we behold in the countenance of the Lord Jesus? Do we remember that Jesus is the Father's countenance, that in Jesus we behold the Father; that the Father's infinite love is manifested and given to us in His Son? Do we rest in the sweetness of His name Father? Or do we not sometimes need the assurance of Christ—"The Father himself loveth you?" Is there not a secret thought lurking within us as if the Father was not as gracious and as near to us as the Lord Jesus? Or that the reason why God loves us is because Christ died for us,

instead of seeing in the death of the Saviour the result as well as the manifestation of the eternal Father-love. We do not honour the Son, we do not truly understand and receive His salvation, we do not truly avail ourselves of His mediation, unless by Him we come to the *Father*, and rest in the infinite love which through Christ is ours. And this love is all-comprising. Because He is our God and Father, who hath given us the Son, He will with Him freely give us all things.

Again, do we glorify the Father in the Son? Do we constantly think of the Father as in Christ? Do we view and receive His gifts and blessings, His creation and providence, as in and through the Word, our Lord Jesus? Do we constantly hear the voice from the most excellent glory—"Hear Him." Do we receive "all things," material, intellectual, moral, spiritual, out of the once-pierced hands of "the Son," to whom the Father hath given them? Do we see them purchased with the blood of atonement? Is redemption the basis of our life? Is Christ to us Alpha and Omega, because the Father is in Him and

He is in the Father? Do we know the name Son?

Do we know the Holy Ghost? The Father is God above us and for us, the Son is God with us, the Holy Ghost is God in us. As the Spirit of Christ, the glorified Son of man, He descends into our hearts, and brings to us, with quickening and renewing power, the love of the Father and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him Christ lives within us, and is our Light, our Strength. Through Him God works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Do we rely continually in humility and gladness on His help and on His power? Do we enter into the fulness of covenant-blessing that God the Father will dwell in us, and take up His abode in our hearts? Do we know that we are anointed, and thus one with Him who is the Christ; or do we not often attempt to know and trust the Father and the Son without the light and strength of the Spirit, by whom alone divine life is kindled and sustained in the heart of man? The Spirit is Christ's gift and the Father's promise. God's thoughts and works are fulfilled by Him.

As our Christian life and growth are thus connected with the knowledge of the name of God, so the separation in our thoughts, heart, and life of the ever-blessed and glorious Three is the source of all error and weakness. To speak exclusively of Christ, ignoring the election of the Father and the work of the Holy Ghost, is dangerous, and leads men to substitute an imaginary Christ for the true Lord, and a self-wrought faith for the faith which is the gift of God. To dwell exclusively on the election of the Father and the work of the Spirit (and by exclusively I mean viewing Christ in a secondary and subordinate manner to these) is to conceal Christ as the open Door, the Saviour of the lost, the Fountain free and open to "whosoever." To dwell on the Father's love and the Saviour's grace, and not on the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, is the source of that want of assurance or fulness of faith which is always seeking for testimony and confirmation in that which is changeable, instead of recognising the testimony of God's Spirit to our spirit that we are the children of God. It is also the source of a low standard of obedience and service. For-

getting that we have received the Spirit, that we may walk in the Spirit, we rest satisfied with our languid and unfruitful condition; and instead of living in newness of life, and doing the works of Christ, we walk as men, and the power of Christ's resurrection is not manifested by us (1 Cor. iii. 3).

Very awful and very blessed is the mystery of the Trinity. For now we can say, The Lord is our God. He not merely gives us blessings, and bestows upon us gifts, but He himself is ours. Even in nature God is near us in a most incomprehensible manner, for in Him we live and move and have our being. He is the life of our souls, and the animating power of our spirits. But by grace, in the perfect self-manifestation of the divine name, He is ours in a sense far deeper and more wonderful. He gives us righteousness; yea, Christ himself is our righteousness. He gives us life; yea, Christ himself is our life. He sheds abroad His love in our hearts; yea, the Holy Ghost himself dwells within us. He strengthens us; yea, Himself *is* our strength. God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—is our God; He is our

light, our righteousness, our holiness, our peace. He, as the Spirit, is our prayer; by Him we long after Him; by Him we thirst for Him, who is the ever-living Fountain. We are "of God," for God dwelleth in us. All that is within us is continually influenced, guided, strengthened by Him; not merely as the God above us, but as God dwelling in our hearts, working in us, both to will and to do. The Father and the Son have their abode within us, even by the coming of the Holy Ghost, and thus we also dwell in God. How awful is the Christian's life! Hidden, indeed, from the sight of the world, and often from the weak perception of our own faith, so that we need continually to be reminded, "Know ye not that your life is hid with Christ in God—that Christ and the Father are hid in your hearts, even in the Spirit, who is given to you—that you are the temple of the Holy Ghost—that according to the blessing of the new covenant, God is, dwells, walks in you, and you in Him?

Thirdly, Let us consider our *character* in the light of the name. We are children of the Father,

and therefore exhorted to be followers of Him. Christ exhorts us to be generous, bountiful, forgiving, to love the ungrateful, to give for the sake and joy of giving, to cherish kind thoughts and benedictions towards our enemies, that we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven, for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. And He adds the great word, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect."*

Be, not *become*. It is not a gradual process of self-improvement; it is not a slow ascent of our own exertion, to which the Lord here exhorts us. By virtue of our adoption and engrafting into Christ, we are to behold continually the Father, and at all times to walk in the Spirit and not according to the flesh. Nature calls that good which is imperfect; but grace calls none good but God, and cannot rest satisfied except in the divine image. The very thought of the Father should fill the heart with sweetness and love, and should make us fatherly and godlike.

* Matt. v. 43–48; Eph. v. 1.

We are called to be *sons*. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God." We are one with Christ; therefore we are to be Christ-like. And this is to be Christ-like, to possess and manifest the filial Spirit. He sought the Father's glory in the salvation of man. His life was a mission. He obeyed unto death. To Him service was liberty and joy. He was Neighbour to all who needed His help and consolation. He went about doing good. He published the glad tidings, the acceptable year of the Lord. He had only one aim, and was always about His Father's business. Harmless and undefiled, holy and perfect, He was the Friend of sinners, and the Consoler of the penitent. He saith to His disciples (on ten different occasions) "Follow Me." And His path is so clear and shining, that we cannot mistake it. He went *down* from glory to humiliation, from heaven to earth, from power and riches to weakness and poverty, from the throne to service; thus lower and lower He descended until He reached the lowest depth—the death of the cross. The Father exalted Him. Thus are we to follow,

and to go outside the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ. Thus are we to serve and wash the disciples' feet, and in our afflictions and trials learn the fellowship of His sufferings. And like Christ, we are to see by faith the joy that is set before us, the glory which follows. Let us remember that we know the name of the Son of God, and that we are called to be like Him, to be sons of God, who honour, love, and obey the Father, and who are strangers and pilgrims on earth, waiting for the heavenly inheritance.

We are called to be Christians, that is, men anointed with the *Holy Ghost*. We are separated from the world by the Spirit as well as the blood of Christ. Often we forget that we are the "children of the Spirit" (Luke ix. 55). We are gloomy and desponding, and forget that we have received a free and royal Spirit. We speak our own words, and are anxious, trusting in our own wisdom and prudence, and forget that we have received the Spirit to speak in and by us. We do the works of the flesh, and forget that the fruit of the Spirit is the manifestation of Christ's life and power. We have received the

Spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. It is written, "The Spirit and the bride," because the Church is to be like the Spirit, even as she is conformed unto Christ. The presence of the Holy Ghost ought to be felt in our presence, even as the assembly of apostles, elders, and brethren realised so fully His influence and power, and were so filled with His light that they were able to write: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts xv. 28). We are called spiritual* because the Holy Ghost dwelleth in us.

Thus are we not merely to trust in the name Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but to sanctify and to represent that name in our characters and lives.

And when at the end of our earthly pilgrimage we look back on our innumerable and grievous sins, the imperfections and stains of our highest moments and best words and deeds, the fragmentariness of our services, the incalculable sum of our omissions, the irreparable neglect of opportunities of sowing and labouring in the field of God—when in the light of the name of God

* 1 Cor. *passim.*

we behold our sins, our failures, our unworthiness —when we feel abased by the contrast between our calling and privilege, as Sons of the Most High, Bride of Christ, Temple of the Holy Ghost, and our actual life and walk on earth, then may we again become little children, and bringing nothing with us but utter weakness and dependence and sinfulness, out of which nothing can come that is good and well-pleasing in God's sight, may we hear the blessed name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and be anew baptized into the name of the covenant God, and with deepest humility and most assured confidence say, "Salvation is of the Lord."

NOTE.—*The doctrine of the Trinity and the modern Synagogue.*

The doctrine of the Trinity is the great stumbling-block to modern Jews. It is the boast of the Synagogue of recent times that the great mission of Israel is to testify of the unity of God among the nations of the world, and they represent this as the treasure committed

to their guardianship, to teach the one supreme God. The claim has no solid foundation, and rests upon important misconceptions.

The apostles of the Saviour, brought up in the Scriptures, true Israelites, proclaimed the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost among Jews and heathen, without fear of coming into collision with the monotheism of their own brethren, or of being mistaken by polytheistic pagans; so deeply rooted was their doctrine in the teaching of Moses and the prophets, so thoroughly in harmony with the divine manifestations given unto the fathers, and with the true spirit of worship in God's ancient people; so thoroughly distinct from, and opposed to, every species of polytheism, so strong in its assertion of the unity of the Godhead.

And the Gentile nations, who since the dispersion of Israel to this day have given up idolatry, and learned to adore the only true God who spake to the fathers by the prophets, have derived their knowledge, *not from the synagogue, but from the Church;* and the name of Jesus, the attractive power of His

dying love, has been the influence which has brought light and love to the hearts of them who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. Thus Israel ought to learn from history, that the central power which, according to prophecy, is to attract and renovate the heathen world, is not in the Synagogue, which rejected Jesus, but in that very Jesus, the rejected Nazarene, who is Lord, the Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel.

But not only is it the triune name of God by which the unity of God has been proclaimed among all the nations of the earth, but Israel has, by the rejection of Messiah, lost the knowledge of Jehovah, for in the latter days they shall *seek* the Lord and their King (Hosea iii. 4, 5). The Synagogue lays emphasis upon the unity of God (or rather, to use a word of Coleridge, unicity, for the Church is constantly testifying of the one Godhead). How different from their abstract idea of One is the God of Scripture, the God of the fathers, of Moses and the prophets. He is the covenant-God, living with and among His people; He

reveals Himself as the Redeemer; He influences the heart by His Holy Spirit; He promises and prepares fuller self-manifestation, the new covenant of forgiveness of sin, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

The Lord God and Israel had a history, progressive and living; and the true people of God waited for the coming of the Lord and of His Spirit. Since the rejection of Jesus, Israel has been in the wilderness, without prophecy, without high priest, without temple. Tradition and scepticism have reigned among them. The phrase, Israel's mission is to proclaim the unity of God, is shallow. In rejecting the Lord Jesus, and hardening themselves against the Messianic predictions quoted by the Church, the Jews rejected also the opinions and testimonies of their fathers. Such an expression of Raschi as the following is by no means isolated—"Our Rabbis have expounded it of the King Messiah" (Ps. xxi.), "but it is better to expound it further of David himself, *in order to answer heretics.*" Thus Ps. ii., xlv.; Isa. ix.; Zech. xii., and other passages in which the divine dignity of the Messiah is declared, were rightly

interpreted by the ancient Synagogue.* Alas! modern Jews as a rule do not understand the force of the Saviour's question—"How does David call Him Lord?"

The testimony of Jewish writings to the doctrine of the Trinity is not inconsiderable. In the Targumim, we find that Israel understood the teaching of Scripture concerning wisdom and the Word. For instance, Gen. i. 1 is translated *Bechukmetha*—"by wisdom God created heaven and earth," identifying wisdom with the beginning. Again, Exod. iii. 8—"God redeemed Israel by the Word" (*memra*). Again, Num. xxiii. 21—"The word of Jehovah is their help, and the Shechina of their King is among them," and another Targum renders it "the shout of their King Messiah."

That Israel retained the knowledge of a plurality of divine Persons—of the Mediator, the Word or Wisdom, the Metatron, by whom and for whom all things were made, that they connected this Word with the Messiah

* Compare the late Dr M'Caul's most interesting and instructive tract, "The Doctrine of Isaiah liii." Also his work, "Rabbi David Kimchi, Commentary on the Prophecies of Zechariah."

and with redemption, appears from many passages of the Sohar and other Jewish writings. It is taught that the Metatron is the image which was erected by God; that this Word or Wisdom is the Mediator between God and man; that He is called the Angel of the Lord, who went before Israel—the Gate by which the righteous enter. Of Him it is said, "And Jehovah went before them" (Exod. xiii. 21). He is spoken of as the oldest in the house of God, the beginning of the creation, who rules above all, who restores peace in the heavens (Job xxv. 2), who comprises in Himself all gradations of creation, and is the bond of all. He is represented as the exact manifestation of the hidden God. As God is, so is the Shechina, or the glory of God.

The following is a specimen of Jewish speculation on the divine name:*—"Hear, Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah. The Holy One, blessed be He, is called One; but the expression of His name is in three letters. How do I know that He is one, and that all His names and praises are in

*Zunz, "Gottesdienstliche Vorträge," 168, quoted by Delitzsch.

threefold form? Because His name is threefold—Jehovah, our God, one Jehovah; behold, His name is threefold. Jehovah, Jehovah, God full of mercy (Exod. xxxiv. 6); behold, His name is threefold. Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts (Isa. vi. 3); behold, His praise is threefold. Great is Jehovah, and worthy to be praised, and His greatness unsearchable; behold, His praise is threefold. Then *sang* Moses this *song:* I will *sing;* behold His praise is threefold. And thus the Song of Songs consists of song, and of two songs, a threefold song."

On the divinity of the Messiah, the Sohar says —"Thou art the Son, faithful Shepherd; of Thee it is said, 'Kiss the Son.' Thou art the Lord of Israel, the mighty One on earth, Lord of ministering angels, Son of God and of the Shechina, which is Mercy." In another place we read—"The question was asked, What is the Messiah's name? Rabbi Aba bar Cabana said, The Lord; for the Scripture saith, 'And this is the name by which He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness'" (Jer. xxiii. 6). Another Rabbi said on this passage, "And who is it that will speak to

Jerusalem to comfort her? Is it not the Lord our Righteousness, is it not the King Messiah?".

The following old *midrasch* on the suffering Messiah is translated literally by Delitzsch, and is most interesting, as showing the circle of thought in which Jewish minds moved—"In Thy light we see the light, saith the Psalmist. It means the light of the Messiah. When Scripture says, God saw the light that it was good, it teaches thereby that the Holy One, blessed be He, even before the creation of the world, thought of the Messiah and His works, and that He hid under His throne of glory the primeval light for the Messiah and His age. Then said Satan before the Holy One, blessed be He, For whom is the hidden light under Thy glory throne? He answered, For Him who shall one day conquer thee, and confound thee with shame. Then Satan asked to see the light; and when he saw it, he trembled, and fell on his face. Yes, verily (he exclaimed), this is the Messiah, who shall hurl me and all who are heathenish into hell. For it is written, He shall destroy death for ever, and God the Lord shall wipe all tears from their faces

(Isa. xxv. 8). . . . The Holy One began to make a compact with the Messiah after He had created Him, Those who are to be preserved with Thee shall bind Thee in iron bands by their sin-guilt: they will cause Thee to suffer like a calf, whose eyes become dim, and put Thee to death by their unrighteousness. And on account of their iniquity Thy tongue shall cleave to the roof of Thy mouth. Art Thou willing to undertake it? The Messiah asked, How long is this suffering to last? The Holy One replied, One week (Dan. ix. 26) I have assigned to Thee; after Thy soul has endured the utmost agony, I shall deliver Thee from all woe. Then exclaimed the Messiah, Lord of the world, With rejoicing of heart and thanksgiving I undertake the suffering on condition that none of Israel shall be lost, not only of the living, but those who in my day shall have died, and those who shall afterwards be created by Thee."

These passages,* and many more might be added, show that amidst much darkness, imperfection, and confusion, the Jews, both before

* Delitzsch, in "Sant auf Hoffnung," ix. p. 84. Auszüge aus dem Buch Sohar. Berlin, 1857. Philosophie der Hebräer v. Ötinger.

and since the Christian era, possessed some knowledge of the mystery of the Father, and Son, and Spirit, of the Word of God, the Mediator, the Messiah, and of the nature of His work.

May the Church of Christ, with ardent and longing love and with continual prayer, remember the Jews, still beloved for the Father's sake, and still reserved for great mercy and spiritual and national restoration. Christians owe them not merely a debt of gratitude, but a debt of restitution for evils inflicted. I refer not to the cruel persecutions which the Jews have had to endure, but to the misrepresentation of Christian doctrine, which alienated them from the gospel and prejudiced them against it. The Church of Rome, with her Mariolatry and image-worship, could only fortify the Jews in their opposition (though in the marvellous mercy of God the truth, even in spite of so many grievous errors, has in that communion also been blessed to Israelites in all ages); the scepticism and rationalism and deadness of Protestants has exerted a most pernicious influence on them, so that many

have given up faith in revelation and in all objective truth. While we are bound to make every possible effort to declare unto Israel the name of their God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, let us constantly look up unto Him who has promised to have mercy and pour out upon His chosen people the Spirit of grace and supplication. For the veil which conceals from them the glory of Jehovah in the face of Christ is upon their *heart;* and who can touch the heart, but God only? The time is drawing nigh when God shall arise and have mercy upon Jerusalem, and all Israel shall turn to Jehovah and be saved. But even at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

VI.

THE NEW OBEDIENCE.

SERMON VI.

THE NEW OBEDIENCE.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—MATT. xxviii. 20.

WE must first know the name of God, before we can love God and keep His commandments. We must first enter into the blessedness of the new covenant, before we can bring forth fruit and glorify the Father. Jesus reveals to us first the name of God, the Son's free and all-sufficient grace, the eternal and unchangeable love of the Father, and the sovereign and omnipotent, renewing and sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost; and then, after through the knowledge of God, there have been given unto us all things which pertain unto life and Godliness, He teaches us to observe all things whatsoever He hath commanded us.*

* "Da, quod jubes, et jube quod vis, Deus meus."—AUGUSTINE.

Jesus reminds His disciples in these words of what He had so emphatically taught them before—"One is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. xxiii. 8).

The Jews felt it their pride and glory to be the disciples of Moses. Can we wonder at it? Like a sublime mountain height, Moses towers above all the servants and saints of God who preceded the advent of our blessed Saviour. Whether we regard his marvellous history from the little ark of bulrushes to his mysterious death on Mount Nebo, or his unique position in the kingdom of God as mediator of the old covenant, or his wondrously Christ-like character, we feel constrained to exclaim, "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, with whom God spake face to face, until He appeared, who is over all, God blessed for ever, the Messiah of whom Moses testified, the only Son of the Father, and only Master of the new covenant-Church."

Moses was the mediator of the old dispensation. Dedicated to God by believing parents, in whom the faith of Abraham was burning with the fervour of heroic courage and hope,

guarded by the unseen hand of loving Omnipotence on the cruel cradle of the Nile, sheltered and trained by Pharaoh's daughter, and instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians—by a free choice of faith, which had grown with his growth, Moses, the only free man of his nation, espoused the cause of his brethren, because they were God's people, and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world. And after the earthborn elements of his fiery zeal, in the premature manifestation of the royal spirit with which God had endowed him, had been subdued by the stillness and discipline of his shepherd life in the wilderness of Midian, he was called by the God of his fathers, who revealed Himself as Jehovah, to deliver His people out of the house of bondage. By faith he obeyed. And during forty years he was faithful as a servant over all God's house. God spake to him face to face; through him He gave the law to Israel, and the commandments and statutes which they were to keep; into his hands He intrusted the guidance and government of the people. With him as a mediator, God spake and dealt, and by his intercession the

wrath of God was turned from His disobedient and rebellious children. Moses united the prophetic, priestly, and royal dignity; the name, the favour, and the will of God, were declared by him to the people of Israel.

How much in this history and position of Moses reminds us of our Lord. He also as an infant was the object of the cruel hatred and persecution of a heathen prince. He also was protected miraculously, and sheltered in the land of Egypt. Voluntarily Christ, who was rich, made Himself poor, and without hesitation or struggle rejected the temptation which offered Him all the kingdoms of this world, and in obedience and reverence He chose the path of suffering and reproach. "A prophet like unto me shall the Lord raise up unto you from among your brethren." Such was the description of the Messiah Moses could give. And in that God spake unto Moses as a man speaks with his friend; in that Moses possessed the spirit of self-sacrifice and love, which regards only God's glory and the salvation of his brethren; in that Moses was meek above all men, and lowly in heart; in that Moses was both prophet and priestly

king, whom God appointed to be obeyed implicitly, he is an eminent type of the Saviour.

But even more striking than the points of resemblance are the points of contrast. The one is called Moses, or saved from the water; the other Jesus, or the Saviour, who, needing no redemption Himself, is the Author of salvation to all who believe in Him. The one runs before he is sent, and his zeal is partly carnal; the other, born of the Spirit, is filled with the love of God, and no admixture of earthborn self-love for a moment disturbs the purity of His aim and the humility of His heart. The one prays to die instead of his people; the other is both able and willing actually to lay down His life, and shed His blood for the lost, whose nature He has taken upon Himself. Moses dies in the wilderness; he cannot lead the Israelites into the promised land, because his heart failed to rise to the height of God's pardoning love, to comprehend the depth and breadth of the divine thought of forgiveness. He did not sanctify the name of God before the people, when, instead of announcing simply the loving-kindness of Jehovah who freely and tenderly forgives, and delighteth in mercy, he

was angry, and rebuked the transgressors. Jesus declared the name of God fully: when He died on the cross, He revealed the hatred of God against sin, but Himself absorbed and exhausted the fearful cloud in His own person. Towards the people who crucified Him, towards the penitent thief who appealed to His help, towards the world of sinners, He declared nothing but love and perfect redemption. Therefore is He the true Joshua, who leads us out of Egypt's bondage into the land of perfect peace and blessedness.

But the chief contrast between Moses and Christ is this—that the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

* The law was a shadow of future things. The very name Jehovah refers to the future manifestation of God. The significance of the law was not so much for the time of the law as for the time of the gospel, to which it is not merely a contrast, but of which it was also a shadow, an outline in bold and marked characters, although also a veil, concealing its brightness. As Ziegler says, "Moses, the first mediator, the beginner of law, predicted Christ the second Mediator, the Author of faith and End of the law. Moses, who spoke to God face to face, and beheld Him in His appearance, testified of Him who stood infinitely nearer to God, to whom he was related as the house to its builder, as the servant to the son of the house; he could exclaim with joy, נָבִיא כָּמֹנִי, a prophet like unto me. As Adam is the type of Christ in the universal region of humanity; so in the special field of revelation Moses and Christ are both

Moses was a servant; Jesus is the Son. Moses speaks in the name of God; Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Moses brings the law written on tables of stone; Jesus, by the Holy Ghost, writes the law of God on renewed hearts. Moses has the ministry of condemnation; Jesus gives remission of sins and eternal life. The law declares the sinner must die; Jesus declares that He has died, the just for the unjust. There is no grace for them that are under the law; there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

Jesus has left the world, but He has not left His disciples in darkness. When Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, left Israel, and ascended Mount Sinai, the people forgat God, and fell into idolatry and sin. When Jesus left His disciples and ascended up to heaven, they returned to Jerusalem with joy; and in prayer and supplication they glorified God with one accord. And when Moses returned, the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold

contrasts and parallels, heads in which all humanity, as far as it is reached by revelation, is comprised."—"Göttl. Offenbarung, 151.

his face for the glory of his countenance. And yet what was that glory compared with the glory of the Only-begotten? But Moses could not communicate life and light and love to the people. Between him and them was only the law, engraven in stones; and the law could not give life,—the letter killeth: it was the ministration of death and condemnation. But between Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and His disciples, is the fiery stream of God's Spirit; the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus sends from the Father, is the bond of union; and looking up to heaven, we can now truly say, "With Thee is the fountain of life, and in Thy light we see light."

The law is holy, just, and good. It is based upon the revelation of God. The knowledge of His character and of His redemption forms the basis and is the source of the commandments. "I am holy, be ye holy. I am the Lord thy God, which has redeemed thee, and brought thee out of the land of Egypt." The law which God gave to Israel is no abstract system of ethic, it is the manifestation of the character and will of that living and loving God who

had adopted Israel as His people. His* authority is the foundation on which it rests. The law is summed up in what is exactly opposed to law, and can never be obtained and called forth by law: in love, love to God, undivided, with all thy heart, deep and all-penetrating, with all thy soul, continuous, active, and co-extensive with all the energies and relationships of life, with all thy strength. And this love to God in thought, word, and action is inseparably connected with love to man, for God's sake and in God. Israel was to be kind and considerate to the stranger, to the blind, to the helpless, because "I am the Lord thy God." On these two commandments, essentially and inseparably connected, hang all the law and the prophets.

Love to God and to man is the sum and substance of the law. This is the centre. But

* On the commencement of the Decalogue Ziegler says, "We see God begins His law not *rationaliter*, not with universal, cosmopolitan, or abstract *a priori* words, but in a very limited, special, historical, and at the same time religious, dogmatic manner. The whole morality of the law is based on dogma and history; she is the daughter of both; that the one-sided, abstract, rational moralists, who are opposed to positive religion, may learn at last to be ashamed of their shallowness."

the circumference of the law embraced the whole social and political life of the Jewish nation. Separated from all idolatrous nations, dedicated unto Jehovah, they were to be a priestly people, serving God as their King. Israel was a kingdom in which God was King, and in which, therefore, all laws were divine commandments. The whole civil and ceremonial law was therefore essentially moral. In all the details of life, in their food, in their garments, in their method of cultivating the land, in all their occupations and relations of life, they were to sanctify the Lord their God; they were to remember and show forth that they were separate from the nations, dedicated unto Jehovah; whether they ate or drank, or whatsoever they did, all was under the law of God, and unto His glory.

So perfect, comprehensive, and homogeneous was the law which God gave to His people. And as it was exceeding broad, it was also exceeding deep. Outward signs were only representatives of inward realities; outward observances only symbols, mementoes and seals of inward acts. Israel knew that God

desired truth in the inward part, that the true burnt-offering, the truly acceptable sacrifice, was a broken and a contrite heart, the surrender of the will to God in loving obedience; they knew that the real worship of God was in spirit and in truth, and that from the utmost corner of the land the voice of prayer would reach His ear; they knew that there was a circumcision made without hands, even the renewal of the heart by the Lord himself. The law, which was so comprehensive and multiform, was also most concentrated in its depth, most sublime in its height. It reached down into the inmost source of human life, the heart; it reached to the very throne of God, and demanded righteousness in the sight of the Holy One.

The unity of the law, proceeding from one Author, pursuing one object, animated by one spirit, renders a perfect obedience necessary. "Cursed is he who remaineth not in all the commandments of the law to do them. If a man shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." If this appear harsh and severe, a few moments' reflection will show that it is inevitable and necessary. For the

law is built upon the authority of the holy and perfect Lawgiver. We obey, not because the command approves itself to our reason, our conscience, our moral sense, but because we recognise the voice of Him who is Lord and God, whose right it is to command. Hence, whatever command we transgress, we disregard the authority of Him whose honour is the aim of the whole law. We have broken, not *one* law, but *the* law; we have transgressed, not merely the law, but we have offended the majesty of the Lawgiver.* Again, infinite wisdom, ever mindful of the chief and central end of the law, and always regarding the good of the whole, has so framed the law that it forms an organic unity;

* The whole point and glory of the law is our relation to the Lawgiver. "This is to fulfil the law: to fall on our knees before the Lawgiver, and say, Thou alone art He whose right it is to command; for me it is to obey. This is the sublime grandeur of the true moral relationship between God and man: that man in his poverty and littleness—and were he the highest he is still little, and were he the richest in gifts he is still poor—can look up to the eternal God, and bring his life and action into harmony with His holy right, and be in concord with the eternal Majesty, which is the only supreme rule as long as creation lasts. But this true sublimity of heart-morality can be felt only by him who recognises a living, personal God as the Source of law."—ROTHE.

and as the sufferings and disease of one member disturb and affect the health and well-being of the whole body, it is not possible to break one of the commandments without transgressing the whole law.* And thirdly, he who transgresses one law has thereby rendered himself unable to observe the rest. For to have favourite commandments is only a different form of expression for having favourite sins. So inexorable, by the very nature of the case, is the demand of the law for an entire and perfect obedience.

Such are the most obvious features of the law which God gave unto His people by Moses. And what was the purpose of the law? The law was perfect, holy, and good, but men are fallen, sinful, and impure; they are carnal, and sold under sin. The heart, which is to love God, is cold and hard, estranged from God and desperately wicked; the soul, which is to cleave to God, cleaveth unto the dust, and is in dark-

* Comp. James ii. 10, 11—"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," &c., with evident reference to the Lord's saying, Matt. v., "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments," &c.

ness and death; the will, which is to choose and serve God, is captivated and fettered by sin. The law demands righteousness; but through the law there is no righteousness possible to fallen man. The whole object of the law was to convince man of sin, to show him his wretched and guilty condition, to pronounce judgment and condemnation against him—in short, to leave him hopeless, speechless, helpless in the sight of God. The object of the law is to kill and to wound. And in proportion as men attempted to keep the law, this object was attained.

The Pharisees, who first overlooked the spiritual meaning and depth of the law, who regarded merely the surface of the commandment and rested satisfied with an outward observance of regulations, never looked into the bright mirror and never beheld their own image. Hence they were at peace and contented; they imagined themselves righteous—nay, they had even the infatuation that they could do more than God commanded, and acquire a measure of merit. They were sound and whole-hearted, and needed no physician. They thanked

God that they were not like other men, and approached Him without crying out of the depths. And it would be to out-Pharisee the Pharisees were we not to add that such is the contented state of most people among ourselves and in our day. They are so little at home in the secret chambers of their hearts, they so little reflect on the true character of their lives and the inner motives of their conduct, they so little reflect on their relation to God, they so little measure themselves by the standard of God's law, that, though they admit their faults and imperfections, they do not feel that they are guilty and sinful and polluted in the sight of God, that they are vile and wretched like lepers, and that there is not merely uncertainty as to their future state, but that there is most certainly, even now, the wrath of God resting upon them. No wonder that the piercing cry is not uttered by them, "What shall I do to be saved?" The law has not killed them yet.

As the law brings condemnation, so there is nothing in the law to renovate the soul, to strengthen and vivify it, to enable it to rouse itself to obedience. That young man who fancied

he had kept all the commandments of God from his youth, and who wished to do some great and extraordinary thing to insure God's reward, went away sorrowful. And why? Because he loved riches. His strength failed him. With eager impatience he demanded a high aim, a difficult task, a great exertion, worthy of his ambition and exalted sanctity. And when Christ tested him, and asked him to give up all for God, he went away in sadness, because while conscience understood the demand, the heart would not yield. The law left him powerless to serve God.

And this was the twofold experience of Saul of Tarsus, who in most emphatic and heart-touching language explains to us the true nature of the law in many of his epistles. He found that the law was not the death of sin, but the strength of sin. He did not know what sin was until the law came and said, "Thou shalt not covet." The commandment which was ordained to life he found to be unto death. He expected to obtain righteousness by the works of the law. He found that the law pronounced judgment. And as the law revealed sin and

death, it revealed nothing else. It could not go beyond. Moses did not enter Canaan; so the Law left him in the wilderness. It could neither remove the curse nor give life. It announces condemnation, but utters no message of pardon; it reveals death, but possesses no quickening power.

And yet how important and great is the mission of the law! When we are reminded of what the law cannot do, we are apt to ask, Wherefore then serveth the law? It is indeed the forerunner of Christ; the schoolmaster who prepares us for Him who, as the Son, maketh us free. But it is this chiefly by leading us to a knowledge of sin, by convincing us both of our unrighteousness and our pollution, by showing us that with man, out of his own resources of strength, it is impossible to be saved. The preaching of the law is very different from the preaching of morality; and the preaching of the law remains without effect until the Holy Ghost applies it to the conscience. Without the Holy Ghost the law does not kill, even as without the Spirit the gospel does not quicken. The Pharisees pos-

sessed the law, and yet when Christ came, who is the End of the law, He did not find them poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungering and thirsting after righteousness; they did not take the last place, the position of a sinner supplicating mercy. And as they knew and felt not the curse of the old covenant, the gentle voice of the Shepherd, who declared the blessedness of the poor and needy, attracted not their hearts. Saul of Tarsus knew not the power of the law until Jesus appeared unto him. He had been alive, in peace and strength, walking in the commandments and statutes of the law blameless; and not until, through the appearing of the Lord Jesus, there had been revealed to him the true character of his past life, and the true condition of his soul, did he know that he was carnal, sold under sin, condemned and helpless, that he was without righteousness and life in the sight of God.

All approaches of God are blessed. It is better to be killed by the law, than to be alive without the knowledge of sin and fear of God. It is better to be wounded by the darts of divine justice and holiness, than to roam in

the low valley of earthliness with an unbroken heart and a blind conscience. It is better to see ourselves dwelling in a strange land, very far off from the Home of love and light, and separated by mountains which seem impassable, than to dwell at ease in Babylon, and forgetful of heaven, feel satisfied with earth. Second to the blessedness of consolation and joy in Christ is the blessedness of godly sorrow, contrition, and fear. And why? Because it is *God* who kills and wounds. True, the soul is in the depths, but out of the depths the soul cries unto God. The very depths are deep because the height from which we are fallen, and for which God has created us, is so great—because the Love against which we have sinned yearns over us with such infinite, tender, and holy jealousy. And as we feel humbled and abased by the law of God, we do not feel degraded; with a deeper reverence, and with a more solemn love, though overwhelmed with sorrow and contrition, we think of ourselves, and of our fellowmen, as created in the image of God, and this only appears to us degrading, that so long we have been

content without the knowledge, love, and obedience of God, that we have denied our royal nature, and forgotten our heavenly origin and calling. Nor is the fear of punishment, of God's displeasure and wrath, to be thought ignoble and self-centred; there is in this fear the element of reverence and of love, the acknowledgment that in and with God alone is blessedness, and that it is a bitter thing to depart from the Fountain of life, peace, and joy.

All men are under the law, whether they are conscious of it or not. There is only One who can deliver us from the law, from its curse and power, who can bring us out of the wilderness into the glorious liberty of the children of God. No man can do it. Grace and truth come only by Him who is the Son of God, Lord over all. Who buried Moses? *God* buried Moses. And thus no man can bury the law, or make us free from the law. Men may forget and ignore the law; or, entirely misunderstanding the teaching of Scripture, men may say that because they are living in the Christian dispensation they are

not under the law, but under the gospel. We can be freed from the law only by God, and only through death. Through the law we must die to the law, that we may live unto God. Through the death of Christ we have died to the law, and are now married to Christ, and serve God in newness of Spirit (Gal. ii. 19; Rom. vii. 4). Without union with Christ by the Spirit, without regeneration which is a resurrection out of death, no man is delivered from the authority, condemnation, and rule of the law. There are only two covenants: the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

The law itself, given in mercy, and by the same Lord who had revealed to the fathers the promise of life, according to the eternal purpose of His grace—the law itself contained the gospel, so that the broken-hearted might be healed and comforted until the true Consolation of Israel appeared. God's mercy and covenant-salvation, like the bright-blue sapphire sky above the darkness and clouds of Mount Sinai (Exod. xxiv. 9, 10), continually irradiated the old economy, and in the sacrifices, festivals, and chosen

representatives and types of the Messiah confirmed the promises of grace and of redemption. They, who were truly convinced of sin, grasped the promise of forgiveness, reconciliation, atonement; they longed after that perfect restoration in which the sinner is brought nigh unto God, and renewed by His Spirit. Thus there is a twofold element in the law, condemnation and the promise, type and instalment of redemption. Both elements were given in love; in both the purpose was one of mercy. But when the primary object of the law had failed, when men remained proud, self-satisfied, cherishing and excusing sin, without humility and repentance, men failed also to see and enjoy the comfort of this promise, the meaning and substance of the Type. Thus they who walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless were the very Israelites who waited for the redemption in Jerusalem; they honoured the law, and therefore longed for the gospel (Luke i. 5, 6; ii. 25, 37, &c.) Christ is come; and now instead of condemnation behold grace, instead of shadow and type behold perfection and fulfilment, that is truth (John i. 17).

And first of all, let us remember that in Christ only the law of God found its realisation and fulfilment. It had hitherto been only an idea seeking embodiment, a problem awaiting its solution, an outline looking for substance and life. The holy and perfect law of God descends out of the sphere of love, and cannot but demand that which is only to be attained in the region where love reigns, where the Spirit breathes, where liberty is order and obedience is filial. They who seek to obey the law arrive at last at the painful knowledge of the corrupt root, the defiled source from which nothing good and clean can proceed. They find that the law demands of them, not merely to do good, but to be good. The deepest confession of the contrite heart is the exclamation, Behold I was born in iniquity!

The children of the first Adam *cannot* fulfil the law. But God in His marvellous love hath sent His own Son, born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Ghost. A new beginning is given unto us, a second Adam, through whose obedience life cometh unto all who believe in Him. The holy child Jesus, the incar-

nate Son of the Most High, was under the law. It was written on the tablets of His heart. We learn the will and character of God chiefly by contrast. For we start with the knowledge and love of sin and the world. Chiefly by negative commandments, by forbidding sinful works, words, thoughts, and feelings, does the law address us, the God-estranged children of Adam. But Jesus started with the knowledge and love of God. It is this *world* which appears to Him a strange thing, which gradually reveals itself to His astonished mind as opposed to God and alienated from Him. Such was His mind from His earliest childhood, and from the very commencement of His life the will of God was His joy. "How is it that ye have sought me? Must I not be in the things of my Father?" In these words He expresses the radical difference between Himself and mankind. He starts with the knowledge, love, and joy of God, and thus meets the world. We start with the knowledge and love of sin, and thus meet the law of God. Hence we, in reading the commandments of God, are inclined to look at the sinner's difficulties,

taking his part against God, contracting the dimensions of God's requirements according to the narrow thoughts of our heart. Jesus, with the eyes of His heart, saw the law in its breadth and depth; He joyfully filled the entire outline; His willing mind, His loving heart, His filial Spirit entered into the whole mind of God, and penetrated to the depth and substance of God's Word.

And as He perfectly understood and loved the law of God, so in His life, in His words and works and sufferings, He fulfilled it. For He manifested God's name (John xvii. 6). And is not this the highest fulfilment of God's law? —"Be ye holy, even as I am holy." His life was love, love to the Father and love to man —a love which infinitely transcends the love demanded by the law; for it was the love of God, eternal and infinite, love of His enemies, love of self-denial and self-sacrifice, a new love, which, having its source in eternity, manifested itself on earth in the midst of sin and sorrow, showing its divine fulness and glory wrought into all that is sinlessly human, and revealing through the death of the cross the boundless and

secret love of God, which embraced, before the foundations of the world were laid, the guilty and fallen. And as in His whole life He was a burnt-offering, giving Himself for us a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour (Eph. v. 2); so His obedience culminated in His death on the cross, when He became the sin-offering, and laid down His life as a ransom for many. He who fulfilled the law bore the curse of the law in our stead (Gal. iii. 13). As for our sake the Son of God had humbled Himself, and taken the position of a servant, fulfilling all righteousness; so in our stead, and for our acquittal, He suffered the penalty of the law we had transgressed. By His obedience we are made righteous, by His death we are acquitted; or, as the apostle teaches us, we have died in Him to the law. The hand-writing of ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us, is blotted out, and taken out of the way—it was nailed to the cross. Christ has redeemed us who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Christ Jesus is our righteousness. As Luther used to say, "Christ took my sin; nay, I was

His sin, and He is my righteousness. He took what was mine, and gave me what is His." We believe, and Christ is to us the End of the law for righteousness. The gift of God, free and unmerited without the works of the law, is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus are we justified freely by His grace through faith. The law condemns; the gospel brings deliverance and salvation. The law begins with commands, and speaks of blessings which are afar off on mountain-heights, which fallen and guilty man is not able and willing to reach. The gospel begins with the promise of eternal life; it announces pardoning grace and redeeming love; it bestows perfect, divine righteousness. The law demands justice; the gospel declares acquittal: we are justified through Christ, who satisfies divine justice; we are accepted in Him, and now ours is the righteousness which is by faith in the Son of God. Henceforth we are no longer under the law; we are made the righteousness of God in Christ. And yet we do not make void the law, but we establish it; for the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us. The law could not give life; it could not

minister unto us the Holy Ghost. Christ hath quickened us, and by His Spirit dwells in our hearts. And therefore we are able to love. Love is the fulfilment of the law. And as the law could not attain it, so the love which our Lord gives us is something higher and deeper than the law demanded or foreshadowed.

It may be asked, What can be higher than the love which God demands in the law—love with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength? Nothing can be higher in the region of *creation.* No angel can do more than give God undivided and uninterrupted love, manifesting itself in obedience. But through Christ we are raised into a higher region than that of creation. The incarnation of the Son of God has invested us with a new nature, and elevated us to a new and infinitely higher element. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." Why doth He call it new? Not because the family of God is now among all nations, not because the spirit of bondage which characterised the old dispensation has given way to the spirit of adoption. The commandment is new because the love is new; it

is the love which flows from the cross, and which is wrought in us by the Spirit of the glorified Jesus. "As I have loved you." This is the source, the measure, and the strength of the love which Christ commands and gives to His people; it is not merely loving our neighbour as ourselves, and that for the sake of God and in God, but loving our neighbour as Christ the Son of God in His infinite mercy and condescending and self-denying love, loved us.

Great is the glory of the law, but it is a different and an inferior glory when contrasted with the glory of the gospel. We are to love with the love wherewith God loved us. That which was foreshadowed by the gospel part of the Mosaic dispensation, and predicted by the prophets, has been given to us—the Lord came with blood and spirit, and now we are raised to a height to which the law never could rise. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, even from all eternity, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being

found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and was obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross." This mind is to be in us. And this mind can be in us, first, because we through this very love, through the infinite condescension of the Incarnation, and the infinite sacrifice of the cross, have been reconciled to God ; and secondly, because this very love of Christ is implanted in us by the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of God and the love of Christ come together. "For hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, by the Spirit whom He has given unto us." And again, "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, because we love one another." The beloved disciple, whose gospel sets forth most distinctly the glory of the Son of God, and the love of the Father, and the person and work of the Holy Ghost, explains to us in his epistle that God is love, and that the Spirit dwelling in us is *love* dwelling in us. And this accords with the whole teaching of Scripture. For the law could not produce in our hearts what it demands—love ; nor could it minister unto us the life-giving Spirit. The gospel implants in us love, by giving unto

us, through Christ, the Holy Ghost. "By the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Rom. v. 3). The love whereby we dwell in God, and God in us, is His Spirit. God is love; and this is the blessing of the new covenant in Christ the incarnate Son, that He hath given us the Spirit, in whom is bestowed the love which is the fulfilling of the law.

Such is the law of Christ, if law it may be called, that being redeemed by His divine love, we should be filled with His love, and united to Him by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, love as He loved, and, like Him, seek the glory of God in the good of our brethren. The law, which was to convince men of their sin, and which was given parenthetically by reason of man's transgression and pride, necessarily emanated from a lower height; the gospel, as the apostle continually reminds us, has its source in the eternal counsel of God. The promise of life was in Christ before the world began. The righteousness which the law demands is truly fulfilled in us; and yet it is a better, a higher righteousness, for it is God's own love and

Spirit dwelling in us, and bringing forth in us and by us fruit, which is the fruit of Christ the Vine; so that it is no longer we who live but Christ in us.

The obedience of the Christian is thus in every respect new and better than the righteousness which is of the law. It consists in a divine love, it proceeds from the reception of redeeming love, it is formed after a divine pattern, and it is shed abroad and kept in the heart by the Holy Ghost. All the exhortations of the apostolic epistles set this forth in clearest light. We are not to continue in sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace. We are to have our fruit unto holiness, because we are alive unto God through Jesus Christ, and having died to the law by the body of Christ, are married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead.* We are not to lie one to another, not merely because the law forbids falsehood, but because we are in Christ members one of another. The Christian is to live in chastity and purity, mindful that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and that he is

* Rom. vi. vii., specially vi. 14, vii. 4–6.

in vital union with the Lord Jesus. Thus our holiness in life and our walk before God are uniformly based on the redemption of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and not on the commandments of the law, although the child of God reverences and loves the law, meditating on its breadth and depth, and deriving from it instruction and guidance. Between Christ the Vine and the fruit-bearing branches the law of Moses cannot intervene. Not law, but the Holy Ghost is the connecting-link between the Saviour and the disciple, even as the manifestation of the new life is called fruit of the Spirit. And as the Apostle Paul explains in his epistles (especially to the Romans and Galatians) that righteousness is the gift of God in Christ Jesus, received by faith, bestowed freely in grace on all who believe, that it is not through the law or of works; so he likewise emphatically teaches us that it is the grace of God and not the law which now disciplines us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to walk soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; that it is Christ in us, that it is the Holy Ghost by whom we bring forth fruit

unto holiness; that ours is the life of faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us; the new life in the power of Christ's resurrection, in whose death we have died, and who was raised up by the glory of the Father, that we should walk in newness of life. Isaac and Ishmael, Sara and Hagar, Jerusalem which is the mother of us all, and free, and Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children, are *contrasts;* it is impossible to combine them. Christ is the End of the law, both as righteousness and sanctification; and thus the law is fulfilled and a brighter and fuller light shineth in the new covenant-righteousness and in the new covenant-life of which both Moses and the prophets witnessed, and which has now been given unto us who know the accomplished redemption in Christ Jesus. Moses and Elijah vanish, and we behold Jesus only; John the Baptist points to the Lamb of God; in hearing the Son, in listening to His voice, in following the guidance of His Spirit, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us.

Notice the marvellous unity; in Christ is all that we need. The very nature of the

new obedience is the source of our strength to render it. Christ loved us, and the constant remembrance and enjoyment of His unmerited and infinite love gives us strength and renews our strength. The bread which we break, and the cup of communion which we bless, show forth love received, and by the renewed reception of love we are replenished with love. It is *our* feet which Jesus washed, and therefore we, to whom much is forgiven, constantly forgiven, generously and tenderly forgiven, can love and forgive another, and bear one another's burden.* What does Jesus command but that we should receive His love, and have our life constantly renewed by the life which He gave for us? What does He ask us to give unto Himself and to the brethren but His very own love, which He

* The example which Jesus gives us is not merely a pattern which we are to imitate, in which case it would be only law symbolically or dramatically represented. Christ washes His *disciples'* feet; herein is not merely condescension which we are to imitate, but condescension *to us,* love which pities, pardons, cleanses, which stoops to serve, which turns not away harshly and contemptuously from our defilement, but in holy compassion and tenderness cleanses *us from our sins.* It is the gospel in this act which explains the very essence, as it supplies the very spirit, of the commandment. We love, forgive, and help our neighbour *with the love of Jesus.*

has bestowed on us, and is ever bestowing on us? What other yoke and burden does He put on us but His yoke and His burden, of which the agony and darkness were all His, the sweetness and the rest all ours?

Christ is our Master. We are taught to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded. What a wonderful honour and dignity to be the disciples and servants of the Lord Jesus. All that is within us rejoices and magnifies His holy name, that in His unspeakable and gracious condescension He saith to us, "Follow me," and that He permits us to be His disciples, and to live under His loving and righteous rule. For He is the Son of man. In Him we behold the faultless and all-harmonious ideal of beauty and righteousness. In Him the divine idea of man is perfectly realised. He is the true King, the true David, whose heart was not lifted up above His brethren, who, as a Shepherd-King, rules in the righteousness of grace and meekness. In Him are united holiness and mercy, strength and tenderness, zeal and patience, courage and lowliness. He is the fairest among the sons of men, He is

altogether lovely. Who would not love to follow Him? who would not be thrilled with deepest joy to be numbered among His people? He is our Master, who was tempted in all things as we are, and yet without sin; the Conqueror at all times, strong and invincible in the purity of His love; who suffered, who endured contradictions from sinners, who was tried by sorrow, and the unfaithfulness and ingratitude and hatred of the world, who learned obedience even unto death. All His experience on earth, and all the manifestations of His perfect love here below, draw us to Him as our only and blessed Lord and Master.

And when we remember, as we can never for a moment forget, that He is God manifest in the flesh, that He is the Son of God, who in His infinite love for our salvation became man, the glory of His humility and obedience, and of all His human perfection, shine forth with irresistible brightness, and we adore Him our Lord and our God. He is the only Master, good and perfect, for He is the Son of the Most High; *our* Master, for in His wondrous love

He became ours, He became our Brother to be our Head.

He is our Master, for as the Father has predestinated us to be conformed to the human image of His blessed Son, so Christ, by His indwelling presence, is our life and strength; He who commands is, by His Spirit, the power within us to obey His Word and to imitate His perfect example. He draws us, that we may run after Him; He is always ministering unto us, that we may serve Him out of the fulness of His grace.

Christ the Son of God, the Son of man, the glorified Head of the Church, is our Lord. How blessed are we to be His!

"All things whatsoever He has commanded." As the law is one, indivisible and harmonious, an organic unity, pervaded by one Spirit, so are the commandments of Christ essentially and inseparably connected. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." This is the golden thread which connects all the injunctions of the law of Moses; this is the heart-life which pulsates in all its precepts. Christ himself is the Spirit of all commandments; all His words are Spirit and

life; all His precepts are the manifestations of the filial relation and the new resurrection-life and power in which we are to show forth the Lord, who is our righteousness and strength. Call no commandment unimportant, for in what we think least, the most central and vital principle is involved. Call no command outward, for in all that Jesus commands us concerning our words and works, He desires truth in the inward part, and points to the heart, out of which are the issues of life. If we are one with Christ, then the inward unity of all His commandments will be increasingly clear to us, and as one has said,* "We shall know the warm life-blood, which, as the soul, flows throughout all Christ's precepts; we shall taste, I might almost say, their indissoluble unity." Yea, we shall see the one undivided Christ, who was crucified for us, the one Love which has redeemed us, and which desires to form us after its blessed image.

Christ is our Master. He commands by revealing Himself. When He shows us His love, we are drawn, and run after Him. When He

* Rothe.

reveals to us His face, the Spirit conforms us to His image by our beholding Him. "When we shall see Him as He is, then shall we be like Him." The perfect knowledge of His love is one with the perfect obedience of His will. Thus His precepts are not less precious and loving than His promises. In both He gives us Himself; in both He sets forth our inseparable union by the Holy Ghost. Blessed are they who have left all to follow Jesus; who have died to self, to their own righteousness and strength, to sin and to the world; who gaze on the beauty of Jesus, and are filled with His love.

The commandments of Christ are full of light, easily understood and easily remembered. They bear the impress of their heavenly origin. In their lucid simplicity, and in their comprehensiveness and depth, they appeal at once to our reason and conscience. We assent to them immediately, and we never forget the precept after we have heard it once, so strongly and instantaneously do we feel that it is right, that it is from above. And the heart also responds, It is good, it is loving; in keeping thereof there would be great peace.

The commandments of Christ may be summed up according to the various aspects of the inner and outer life.

If we look at the heart, the root and source of life and action, all Christ's commandments are contained in His most touching appeal, "*Abide in me.*" Leave me not. I am yours. In the glorious union of my Godhead and manhood, in my death on the cross, in my resurrection peace and power, in my faithful and all-prevailing intercession, and in the constant and uninterrupted outflowing of the Holy Ghost into you, I am yours. Abide in me. Let neither doubt nor presumption, neither fear nor sorrow, neither sin nor temptation, neither duty nor rest, disturb you, and beguile you to leave your only Haven and Heaven—*me*. Abide in me, and then all my words shall abide in you. n the inmost sanctuary of the soul this is the whole secret of life, peace, and power.

If we look again at the manifestations of life, all Christ's commandments are summed up in His simple words, "*Follow me.*" That is, copy and imitate Christ; let Christ's whole life and walk on earth be before the eyes of your

heart and imagination, the sweet image of His humility and saving obedience, and let Christ guide you in your daily path. Let Him choose your task and your work; leave it to Him to select your cross and trial. Let Jesus go first, and never leaving Him, trace His footsteps.

If we look at our relation to God, prayer, meditation, and communion, Jesus' commandments may be summed up in one word—*in secret;* "Enter into thy closet, and shut the door." Banish the multitude of thoughts which crowd the chamber of the heart and mind, and seek, even when with other believers, to realise the presence of Him after whom the soul thirsteth. Thus speaking to Him in prayer, and hearing His voice in the Scripture, the light of the Father will shine on thy heart and path. For the Father seeth in secret, He regardeth the heart, He seeketh worshippers in Spirit and in truth. Alone with God—this is the true source of sincerity, and the only condition of peace and strength.

If we consider our relation to the world, the commandments of Christ are summed up in one word—*mission.* "I send you; as the Father hath

sent me, so have I sent you;" "Ye are the light of the world," "Go and teach all nations that are without;" "Be fishers of men;" give no offence, but adorn the doctrine of the gospel of grace. As the Son himself came not to do His own will, as He remembered and revealed the Father in all His words and actions, seeking only His glory, thus are we to the apostles of Jesus, His representatives on earth, His message to the world. We are His epistles, declaring the power of His love; we are to reflect His image, and, walking as the sons of God, win the souls of men to the only-begotten of the Father, the only Lord and Saviour. Jesus sent us, "Occupy till I come;" and as He was always in the things of His Father, always sowing the seed, and working while it was day, so our mission is only ended when the Master calls us home.

If we look again at the aim and purpose of our energies and lives, it is summed up in the word *heaven*—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven;" "Set your affections on things that are above;" "Be rich toward

God;" "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Seek to attain to the resurrection from among the dead. Give up all, that in the regeneration of the world ye may receive the reward of Christ.

If we ask, What does Christ command us with regard to our sinful self? the commandments are summed up in the word *death*—"If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out: if thy right arm offend thee, cut it off;" "He that loveth his life shall lose it; he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it;" "Crucify the old man;" "Mortify the members which are upon earth;" "Die daily."

Christ says unto us, "Give." The very simplicity and apparent vagueness of the command invest it with comprehensiveness. We are not told to whom to give, because we are debtors to all, and called to be imitators of God, who causeth His sun to shine on the just and the unjust. We are not told when to give, because as long as we are below, stewards of the gifts of God, and members of the Church of Christ—as long as there are the sick, the poor, the lowly, the helpless, it is both our duty and blessedness to

give. We are not told what we are to give, for all that we have, from the cup of cold water to the gold and silver, and all that we are, our affection and sympathy, we are to give. We are not told *how* to give, because we are to give simply for giving's sake, hoping and looking for nothing to recompense us, as God giveth because He delighteth in giving.

"One is your Master, even Christ." He had nothing on earth, yet He gave constantly until He gave Himself. He had not merely compassion, but He fed the multitude. He not merely wept over the city, but went into its wretchedness and ministered unto the needy. He saith unto us, "Give." And if, like Philip, we are discouraged because we have so little to give, and the multitude is great and the need manifold, let us learn faith, and then see the marvels which a gracious Lord is pleased to work through the ministry of His disciples. Let us give what we have—time, strength, money—above all, and in all, love. And at the end of our journey, when Jesus saith to us, "While I have been with you have you lacked anything?" we shall reply, "No, Lord, never."

Nay, whatsoever by His grace we were able to *give* unto Him in His Church is ours: it becomes a rich treasure: it produces an abundant harvest; for though we give Him of His own, yet it pleaseth Him to reward and crown us with joy everlasting.

Jesus is our Master. Let us enter fully into this solemn and precious truth. How many, and how strong and sweet, are the claims which He has on our obedience! With how many links are we bound to Him! He who loved us, and gave Himself for us; the good Shepherd, whose own the sheep are, and who laid down His life for their redemption; He who has brought us nigh unto the Father, and given unto us His Spirit, is surely our Lord, whom it is our duty and joy to obey with fervour and zeal, out of the abundance of a grateful and adoring heart. The more we know and love Jesus—the more clearly we perceive His grace, and the salvation He has brought us—the more shall we acknowledge Him as our Master, and realise the blessedness of obedience. Is His name Jesus—Saviour? Do we believe in His name, that He saves us from our sins?

Do we rejoice, in that He has bought us with a price? It is that henceforth we are not our own; that being redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, we should pass the time of our sojourning here in fear; that like the Apostle Paul we should serve Him, whose we are. For what purpose has Christ come, but to destroy the works of the devil, to bless us by turning us from our iniquities, to give unto us spiritual and abundant life, to be the Vine, that we may bring fruit unto the glory of the Father? To obey Christ is the very blessedness unto which His grace, by His life, death, and resurrection, raises us.

Love must precede obedience; faith must precede love. Or in other words, grace comes first. God gives all, and of Him is our fruit found. But we must not merely dwell on the distinction between the root and the fruits; we must also, and that continually, bear in mind the vital and essential *connection* between the love of faith and the obedience of love. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." If we are born again as the children of God, as the brethren and disciples of Jesus, as anointed

with the Holy Ghost, we must walk in newness of life. Men may lay a false stress on good works,* but we cannot attach too great importance to them. Our Lord himself, who came to save, whose whole message was love, who gave Himself to be our life, our all in all, continually and most solemnly reminds us that the true reception of His grace, the true possession and enjoyment of His rest and of His life, must manifest itself in obedience, in good works, in fruit. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Again, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Again, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. And the disciple who dwells most on the mystery of our new birth, and of that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was

* "We are calumniated," says Melanchthon in the "Apology," "as not teaching good works. We not merely insist on good works, but also show *how they can be done.*" No preaching is practical except the preaching of free grace and justification by faith; for, as John Berridge quaintly remarked, "He preached morality till there was not a moral man in his parish." The love of God in Christ Jesus is the only power of obedience.

manifested unto us, speaks most simply and fully—"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love His brother also." Likewise the Apostle Paul, who so clearly distinguishes between law and gospel, and so boldly declares the liberty and perfection of grace, exhorts us in all his epistles to walk in Christ, to be zealous of good works, to have our fruit unto holiness.* The Epistle of James explains to us in solemn and piercing language that we are to be doers, and not merely hearers of the Word, and that we who are begotten again of God's own will by the

* "Oh, it is a living, mighty, busy, active thing, this faith, that it is impossible it should not do good continually! It does not ask many questions, what good things are to be done; but before you ask the things are done, and faith is always doing. But he that doeth not good works is a man without faith, and knoweth not what faith is, and what are good works, though he may talk about them. Faith is a living, joyous confidence in God's grace, so certain, that it could die for it a thousand times. And such confidence and knowledge of divine grace makes us joyous, vigorous, and courageous before God and man, so that without compulsion man becomes willing and cheerful to serve his neighbour, and to suffer all things, only to please and praise God, who has shown his soul mercy; so that it is impossible to separate faith and works, as little as you may separate light and heat from the fire."—LUTHER.

word of truth, are to be, as it were, first-fruits of His creatures, living in the spirit and power of holiness and glory.

It is just because nothing can take the place of Christ Jesus as the Foundation; it is for the very reason that there can be no substitute for the renewal of the heart and the indwelling of Jesus by the Holy Ghost, that the absence of good fruit is so alarming, for "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit" (comp. Matt. vii. 15–27).

We are always brought back to the feet of Jesus, to His dying love and quickening grace. Rooted and grounded in His love, we live and bring forth fruit. For have you not discovered yet that Christ's commandments are channels of blessings, that they are gifts and privileges? Christ asks us to give, in order that He may enrich us with the true treasures, and reward us hereafter with a plenteous harvest. He asks us to serve and labour, in order that our souls may have the true Sabbath, and be refreshed with the meat which alone can strengthen. When He tells us to go and bring forth fruit, it is that we may abide in Him, and be more

rooted and grounded in love. When He bids us welcome reproach and suffering, when He insists on our denying and abasing ourselves, it is that we may more abundantly possess the royal spirit of God's children and heirs. We are peaceful and joyous, strong and rich only in obeying our one Master. Christ's commandment is a canopy of love over us. It was thus that Jesus himself abode in His Father's love, by keeping His commandments. Is it not too much our habit to seek rest, peace, and enjoyment in another way? Do we not dwell exclusively and arbitrarily in the promises of the Saviour, building to ourselves an arbour, weaving garlands of beautiful and fragrant flowers, and then taking rest and comfort and encouragement to ourselves? Yet is this Christ's rest? Is it a true peace, which flows like a living river, increasing in breadth and fulness, fertilising the shores on either hand, and issuing in the boundless ocean of divine love? Is it the rest which Christ has connected with His *yoke* and His *burden?* Is it the repose which makes us strong, able to bear the reproach of the world, the storm of affliction, the assaults of the wicked

one; vigorous in the active service of God and ministry of Christian charity? We are at present sowers. Now men do not sow flowers, but seed. And Jesus is the Sower who went forth bearing precious seed. He himself was the seed. He gave all, He gave Himself. He loved, and He died. And they who are His learn to give themselves unto the Lord and the brethren; and while they give they are blessed, and at Christ's coming they shall reap abundantly, and in fulness of joy.

If our conscience says, It ought to be so; if the heart responds, Oh that it were thus with me! let our will also, enlightened and influenced by the Holy Ghost, say, I will obey Christ. For Christ is not Moses bringing us commandments engraven on tablets of stone; He, by the Holy Ghost, dwells within us, and the disciple is able to do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him.

If we are not our own because Christ is our *Master*, we find we are not our own because Christ is our *life*, He liveth within us. Came the law of God to us before, and found another law striving in our members, which was enmity

against God; cometh the law now, it findeth another love, another power, another person within us,—One who is divine, the Lord Jesus himself. Our actions, as far as they are good, are not our own, but Christ's. They are wrought in God; He, as Isaiah saith, hath wrought all our works in us. He is the light within us, and through Him we see. Our good words are not our own, but the Spirit of our Father which speaketh in us. Do we feel burdened, and groan for the light and joy of our heavenly home? even the fainting of our spirits and the longing of our souls are the unutterable groaning of the Spirit. Cometh a more fervent, childlike, loving wave of devotion upon us, we feel that it descends from above and lifts us up, who are sluggish, and prone to cleave to the dust. Are there any bowels of compassion? is there any liberality and joy of bestowing our goods on the poor?—it is the love which is in Christ Jesus which has flowed into us, and is rushing back again into the infinite Ocean. Who but Christ makes our hearts burn within us on our narrow evening path? Who but He gives us to will and to do; and that not by His

mere power and command, but by dwelling within us, by being around us like a garment, by being within us as a guest, and the life of our life?

Choose ye then anew, I beseech you, the obedience of Christ, the indwelling of Christ. One is your Master; crucify self, renounce sin, flee temptation, give up the world, abjure covetousness, which is idolatry, forsake mammon. Serve Christ, and He, who is your Master, will be the Bridegroom of your soul, and His banner over you will be Love. Serve Christ, and He, who is your Master, will dwell in you, and your affections, your thoughts, your energies, your health and your wealth, all that you care for and that you have, will by Him and in Him be consecrated to God, and your fruit will remain for ever.

But if you have not the Spirit of Christ, if Christ dwells not in your heart, if your path is not narrow, without self-denial and sacrifice—if you are a tree which has the leaves of Scripture knowledge, devout frames, and Christian habits, but bringeth forth no fruit, beware lest the most

fatal of all deceptions have ensnared you, and Jesus whom you delight to call Lord and Saviour appear to you on that day a stranger, and instead of the voice of welcome, which shall be remembered by the saints through eternity, ye hear from His lips the awful words, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

Look unto heaven; behold, Jesus is for you a merciful, compassionate High Priest; Jesus is with you, strong and all-victorious by the power of His Spirit. The unprofitable servant wraps his talent in a napkin; his only thought is himself, his safety, his comfort; he does and gives and suffers as little as is consistent with absolute necessity. It is because in his heart of hearts he has never seen the countenance of Jesus he thinks Him a hard Master, austere and exacting; he does not know that He is Love, that He is only a Giver, a Saviour; that with all His commandments He sends forth the quickening Spirit to all who trust in His mercy. But let us lean on Jesus, and hear the gentle voice of the gospel in all His precepts. Your

Master is none other but He who died for you, who loves you with so deep and fervent love, that He has become the Life of your life.

"Take His easy yoke and bear it,
Love will make obedience sweet."

VII.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

SERMON VII.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

THE ascension of our Lord into heaven is not narrated by the evangelist Matthew. The last view of our Lord which is given us in this gospel is Christ on earth, surrounded by His disciples, and the last accents of His blessed voice which are recorded contain the assurance of His presence with us unto the end of this dispensation. The truth which is thus impressed on us is that our Lord, although ascended and seated at the right hand of the Father, is still on earth, that in His disciples He continues His work and mission, that His Church is identified with Him, that through His believers, as the members of His body, He

exerts His power and manifests His grace among the nations of the world. The Church is the representative and the continuation of Christ. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world." Apart from Christ the Church has no light or life; unless His presence go with us, we cannot continue our pilgrimage in the wilderness. Christ is with and in the Church. As He promised, so the Church has experienced it. In coming down from heaven He never left the Father, and in going up to heaven He never left the Church.* Wherever two or three are gathered in His name, wherever disciples go forth to preach the glad tidings and to teach the counsel of God, wherever the Church of Christ is, there is Immanuel, the real presence of our divine Lord.

As Christ was sent by the Father, so is the Church sent by Christ. Jesus was sent to be the Revelation and Representative of the Father, to testify of Him, to declare Him, to do His will, and to finish the work. He was a true and faithful

* Stier calls Christ's last parting with His disciples—"*Ein Abschied der kein Abschied war.*"

witness; He was the perfect Servant, whose meat it was to do the Father's will; He declared the name of God, and finished the work. Now Christ sends us into the world that we may show forth *His* life, that we may be His witnesses, that His light and love may shine, attract, and bless men through us, that men may behold in us Christ, as they beheld the Father in Him. As Christ was, so are we in the world. The Church is so identified with Christ, that she is called Christ. "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." How clear and wonderful is the position of the Church on earth! She is sent, she is entrusted with a high mission, she has only one aim and object—to represent, imitate, obey Christ; nay, more than this, one with Christ by the Holy Ghost, Christ dwelling in her by faith, it is Christ whose testimony is to be heard through her, whose energy and love saves, gathers, comforts, and builds up the souls of men unto eternal life.

What is the foundation on which the Church

of Christ rests? What is the basis, peculiar, distinctive, and all-glorious, on which she is built? What is that marvel and joy which prophets and kings desired to see and hear but which was reserved for the last days? It is nothing less than the incarnation of the Son of God. The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us. The Life which was from all eternity with the Father was manifested, and we have seen it. Divine perfection was wrought into everything that is sinlessly human. The Son of God became man to be our Brother and Lord. When Simon, the son of Jonah, confessed, "Thou art the Son of the living God," Jesus replied, "On this Rock will I build my Church;" or, viewing the Church as a tree, an organism, her Root and Source is in heaven: it is Jesus, the Son of God, exalted on the throne of God. Hence the distinction between the saints of God who lived before the Advent and the New Testament Church. Their faith and hope rested on the same salvation. They are taught by the same Spirit. They also suffered the reproach of Christ. But the Incarnation had not yet taken place. The Son

of God had not yet offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus, the Lord, was not exalted and glorified at the right hand of God, and therefore the Holy Ghost was not yet given. The Church is the body of Christ, the Son of God in human nature, exalted after His sufferings to be our Head. We are the sons of God in Christ, the only-begotten of the Father. Our sonship is based on the death of the cross; it springs out of the resurrection of Jesus; it is given unto us by the Holy Ghost, whom the Father sends us through His Son. The peculiar glory of the Church is *sonship*. Her peculiar mission is to show forth the character and life of the sons of God, who, born of the Spirit, are by Him united with the only-begotten of the Father. The Church is in the world, as Jesus was in the world, who in the lowliness of His humanity revealed His divine glory in love and obedience.

The Church is in the world. This position is assigned to her of God according to the prayer of Christ, "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

The reason is threefold. The first reason is, as always, the glory of God. As Jesus was sent by the Father, that in the face of Christ the glory of God might be manifested; so the Church is to reflect the image of her unseen but everliving Lord, and thus show forth the glory of God. We do not think sufficiently of this first fundamental and central object of the Church's existence. To glorify God is not merely the chief end of man, but it is the great end which God has set before Him in all His acts and revelations. Not merely creation, but redemption has this great end—the manifestation of God. To the praise of the glory of His grace we are chosen, saved, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It is to the glory of the Father that Christ is exalted, and that all tongues shall confess that He is Lord. By the Church the manifold wisdom of God is to be made known unto all angelic hosts. Throughout all ages God is glorified in the Church by Christ Jesus.

And it is by reason of her sonship, of her union with Jesus, that the Church glorifies God. Christ, the Image of the invisible God,

revealed to us the glory of the Only-begotten. He was the true Temple, the manifestation of God, the Presence or Shechina. In Him was seen the brightness of the Father's glory. The Church is the manifestation of Christ. He is no more in the world, but the Church is in the world, and Christ is seen in her. The wife is the glory of her husband; the husband is the head of the wife. The Church is the glory of Christ, who is her Head. The Head of Christ is God, and Christ is the glory of God (1 Cor. xi. 3). The Church reflects the glory of the Only-begotten, who is the brightness of the Father's glory. Nearer than angels to the throne and the Lamb, it is given unto her to glorify God, to declare His name on earth, and to show forth the marvellous love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The heavens declare the glory of God; but the greatest and brightest manifestation of God is the Church on earth, chosen by the Father, redeemed by Jesus, and dwelt in by the Holy Ghost—the bride and body of Christ.

The second reason why the Church is in the world is, that she may follow Jesus, who though a Son, yet learned obedience, and was

made perfect through suffering. Called unto glory and a heavenly inheritance, chosen to be joint heirs with Christ, and to sit with Him on His throne, the Church is first to learn wisdom and patience of the saints, to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. In temptation and sorrow, in conflict and trial, in hardship and grief, the disciples of Christ are to grow in grace and knowledge, to become strong in meekness, in love, in faith, and to be conformed to the image of Christ. It is necessary that through much tribulation we should enter into the kingdom of glory.

The third reason why the Church is in the world is, the conversion of sinners. Through her testimony men are to be brought to the knowledge of Christ. God may reveal His grace to the soul directly. Thus Jesus appeared unto Saul of Tarsus; but notice that even Saul, who was converted by the Lord himself, was, according to Christ's command, linked unto the Church by Ananias, and baptized by him, and thus brought into the congregation of disciples, in which it pleases God to reveal His grace on earth.

The Church is to be the witness of God, and mother of the faithful. Herein is the love of God, the Source of all blessedness, who draws into the circle of giving and blessing all His angels and saints. As God is Love, and as mercy and blessing are His delight; so it is His love that all should partake, according to their several position and capacity, in this joy of love, this delight of giving. Angels, therefore, minister unto the heirs of salvation; apostles, evangelists, elders, deacons, all disciples, are called to be workers together with God, to go forth sowing, that they may rejoice with Him who giveth seed to the sower, and shares His joy of harvest with the labourers, whom His grace permitted and enabled to work for and with Him. And thus all things are of Him and through Him and to Him, and He is Love. Of the Father as the Source, through Christ as the Mediator, and by the energy of the Holy Ghost, the Church is gathered in, angels and saints obeying His command and fulfilling His will, and the blessings which thus descend ascend again through the Spirit and by the Son to the Father in thanksgiving and adoring joy.

We read that Messiah shall see of the travail of His soul, and yet Paul the apostle writes, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth, let Christ be formed in you;" and the beloved disciple writes, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth." Blessed union! Christ and the Church are one, the Light of the world, the Sent of the Father. Through the Church Christ seeks and saves that which is lost; through her He speaks peace and comfort to the weary and heavy laden. The sinners whom His grace has redeemed and His Spirit renewed, He sends forth as His ambassadors, and they beseech men in His stead. He makes them fishers of men; they win souls. And when the chief Shepherd appears, He crowns the under-shepherds with glory and joy, even with the children, who through their testimony were born unto eternal life.

We have thus seen that the Church is in the world, according to God's will and the petition of Christ; that thus God is glorified, the saints prepared for the inheritance, and sinners converted unto eternal life. The Church is in the world, this is her mission, her task; and to

fulfil this mission she has the presence and power of Christ and the Spirit, the favour and guidance of the Father and the Word of Truth. But alas! the world is also in the Church. This is her sin, her danger, the source of constant failure. It is her duty as well as safety to put away the evil thing from the midst of her, to separate herself from the world, and to honour her Lord and Master in the discipline of His house. To remember both her duty to and her danger in the world is difficult; and experience shows that the Church is apt, either to take a narrow view of her mission, and to fail in aggressive courage and breadth of love and sympathy, or to be dazzled by a superficial success, and conforming herself with this present world, increase her numbers with those who, being dead and unrenewed, are without the Spirit, and therefore without the love of Christ.

The Church and the world form a contrast, and they are also opposed to each other. In one aspect, the Church and the world are a contrast, but not antagonistic. In another, the Church and the world are opposites. The

world hates the Church, and the Church, delivered from this present evil world, constantly overcomes it. The world is made for the Church. The Church is sent to the world. The world is loved of God, and Jesus is the world's Light. But world and Church form a contrast. The one is in the sphere of nature, the other is in the sphere of Spirit. The world's life is based upon the work of God in creation, the Church is founded by the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. The world is of the first Adam, who (even before the fall) was of the earth earthy; the Church is born of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, the spiritual man. Viewed as creation, the world is good, beloved of God, and made for the Church. It is the mission of the Church to enter into every department of human life. We must remember that all the relationships of the family and the state are instituted by God. They are of the Father, and therefore for Christ and the Church. Jesus changes the water, which is God's creature, and good, into wine, which is a better and higher gift. Body, soul, and spirit are to be sanctified to the service of God.

Man's intellectual and social life on earth—all that humanity is and possesses—is the territory and sphere upon which the Church should exert her power. Here the Church may not be agressive enough. She may not enter into the wide range of applications which belong to the Word of her Master—"I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." She may not possess sufficient insight, patience, and courage of love to go into the world and attract those who are drawn by the Father and seeking after Him, though as yet they are in darkness and in sin. She may mistake an outward and mechanical separation for the true holiness which Jesus manifested. He came eating and drinking, and went to the Pharisees who invited Him to be their guest. It is no doubt much easier to follow the method of John the Baptist than to imitate the example of our blessed Lord, who in the fulness of spiritual power and love lived among men. For we must never forget that wherever Jesus went He was about His Father's business, fulfilling the mission for which He was sent, and testifying of the kingdom. It was as a prophet that He was invited, and He always appeared

as a preacher of righteousness; He always declared the truths of salvation; He reproved sin, He refuted error, He preached the gospel. He converted every social feast into a solemn assembly, in which the divine message was delivered, and heavenly blessings were unfolded. He never was a passive spectator of worldly and God-forgetting, insipid and unprofitable society. He was always Jesus, the Son of the Father, the Light of the world, the Lover of men's souls. If we quote His example as an authority for our social habits, let us examine ourselves whether we are imitating and even striving to imitate His ways. For only the Son can make us free. The liberty of the Christian is the liberty of the filial spirit, the liberty of a loving heart, and of a strong and God-subdued will. The world must be conquered in the heart, the Father's love must reign joyously and strongly within, if we are to go forth "eating and drinking, using the world as not abusing it," and realising the apostolic word, "All things are yours." But if we are indeed Christ's, and our citizenship is in heaven, then we do not require

the rules and restrictions, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," by which men seek to secure for themselves a safe transit through the realm of earthly occupations and society, fancying that external barriers will prevent the spirit and the contamination of the world from penetrating into their mind. We shall then learn that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5). We shall then be able to distinguish between nature as God's creature and nature as corrupted by sin.* We shall then understand how the Scriptures teach that Satan is the god of this world, and yet everywhere assert that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." We shall be able to see, and enjoy unto profit and edification, that which is truly wise and beautiful in literature, in poetry and art. And while unto them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, all things are pure unto the pure, unto them that see God in the face of His Son Jesus Christ.

* "Natura in quantum Natura est, bona est."

The Christians are thus prepared and gifted to explain and interpret the world. They are taught by Scripture to praise the Lord in all His works, in all places of His dominion. They can recognise and enjoy beauty in art as well as nature. They can trace the hidden longings after God's salvation and light; they love to find in Athens the altar with the inscription, "To the unknown God;" they love to quote the testimony "of your own poets." They are called to befriend and cherish whatsoever things are true and venerable, just and pure, lovely and of good report. They are commanded to seek out "them that are worthy," and bring to them the gospel-salvation of peace.

The Church of Christ, in its best and healthiest days, never despised learning and culture, but received it with thanksgiving and diligent care, judging all things by the Word of God, and measuring all things by the standard of revelation.*

* The Reformers everywhere encouraged education. They planted schools wherever they founded churches. While they spoke very strongly on the "blindness of human reason," they did not confound fanatically the regions of nature and grace,

But the world must be viewed in another light, sad, but equally true. The world lieth in the wicked one. Humanity is fallen; we live in an evil world. And what the evil of the world is in which we are, we may easily know by the evil of the world which is in us. Selfishness, pride, lust, covetousness, trust in that which is outward, and unbelief in that which is spiritual and real, seeking our own glory, and all manifestations of departure from God. Against this world the Church must continually fight. She must assert the opposition between nature and grace, flesh and spirit, anti-Christ and Christ, Satan and God; she must assert the great distinction between the best works, and the most beautiful and noble products of man's spirit and the new creation of the Holy Ghost. She must declare the judgment by which the Prince and the spirit of the world are already condemned, and the wrath which is to come on the enemies of God, and must exhort

they were tinged by no false asceticism and Manichæism. Many beautiful passages might be quoted from Luther, whose love for music, poetry, logic, and all useful knowledge and science was comprehensive and healthy.

men to separate themselves from the world, to save themselves from this untoward generation. She must not allow her testimony to be so indistinct, her life and walk so colourless, her discipline so lax, that unrenewed men can fancy themselves to be members of the mystical body of which Christ is the Head, or that they, who are strangers to the grace and power of Christ, can presume to take part in the guidance of the Church, or in the ministrations of Christ's heritage. Much evil has arisen from the indistinct and erroneous views which have prevailed from an early period of Church history, on the character and position of Christ's flock in the present age, the times of Gentiles. The distinction between the Church and the kingdom was forgotten. The Scripture teaches clearly, that until the return of our blessed Lord Jesus the Church is a little flock without outward strength and glory, hated and persecuted by the world; and her hope is in the Father's counsel and power, her eye is directed to the future, where by divine interference the kingdom will be given to her. Christ has delivered us from this

present evil world, of which Satan is the Prince. The wisdom of this world is not able to recognise the truth as it is in Jesus. When we become enamoured of this world, we forsake the apostle and His Master (1 Cor. i. 20 ; 2 Tim. iv. 40). The world, as our Saviour has foretold, shall hate us. The more we show forth Christ's image, the more closely we follow Him, and testify for Him in word and truth, the more shall the enmity and the persecution of the world among all nations rest on us ; for the world loveth its own, and hateth what is not of the world, but from above. And as the hatred of the world to Christ on earth increased in bitterness, cruelty, and self-consciousness, till at last they nailed Him to the cross ; so the word of prophecy reveals to us that the history of the Church, the Bride, will resemble that of her divine Lord, that the world in the latter days will hate God and His Anointed, and persecute unto death the saints of the Most High who confess and believe His truth. The last development of the so-called Christianised nations is the manifestation of anti-Christ, the open and self-conscious rebellion against

the Father and the Son. The end of this age is judgment. The monarchies of the world are destroyed, and become like the chaff of the summer thrashing-floors (Dan. ii.) Christ and His saints appear in glory; the Son of man begins His reign, and in His kingdom the nations of the earth honour and obey God, and the Father's will is done here as it is in heaven.

The Church soon forgot the position which God has assigned to her, and the object which she was continually to bear in view. Instead of being a witness, continuing the ministry of Christ, endeavouring to save the lost sheep, and to gather those who were of the truth into the fold; instead of relying on her spiritual weapons, the influence of the Word, the converting and renewing power of the Holy Ghost, the attraction of love and holiness, the Church was dazzled by the outward Christianisation of kings and princes, and relying on the influence of worldly power, legislation, and fashion, rejoiced in the strong numerical accessions which soon changed the Church from being a field of wheat in which there were some tares, into a field of

tares in which there is some wheat. The papacy is, in its inmost essence, a false anticipation of the kingdom, a confusion of Church and the Christocracy. As a German writer says, "Rome usurped as a harlot the position and rights which the Bride of the Lamb shall possess in love and holiness."

But it was not merely the papacy which fell into this error. The Churches of the Reformation, which began in the Spirit, soon relapsed into carnal and worldly thoughts and methods. They failed to perceive clearly the peculiar spiritual character of the Church in this dispensation, and its antagonistic character to the spirit and power of the age. The protection of princes and nobles was accepted in a hasty and vague manner. The world became Christianised in such an external and superficial way, that very soon Christianity became worldly, diluted, falsified. The inherent spirit and character of the masses, as well as the dominant genius of the nations, has not been subdued and renewed by the Holy Ghost, and the true character of so-called Christian nations and (multitudinous) churches is beginning to manifest itself.

The real source of the evil is a latent Pelagianism, which forgets, that what is born of the flesh is flesh, and that we must be born from above. It expects the world to become gradually better, as if the world, any more than an individual, can by gradual amelioration get rid of ungodliness, and be conformed to the image of God. It forgets that the progress of civilisation will only hasten the development of the radical, inherent ungodliness and opposition to Christ. Though history teaches us that as civilisation advances wars become more fierce and fearful, men, and even Christians, dream that the age of peace and prosperity has dawned on us. They forget that only Jesus shall make wars to cease on the earth, and that only His Parousia, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, will, after the judgment on His enemies, renew all things, and regenerate the world.

If we hold fast these truths, our position in the world is clear, and our aim distinct. The object of the Church is not to Christianise the world. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, *to take out of them a people for His name*" (Acts xv. 14). "This

gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations, and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14). While the tabernacle of David is in ruins, while Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, while instead of the theocracy there is the witnessing and suffering Church, God is taking out from the nations of the earth a people to know and serve Him. The Church is an election; its character is elective, and not universal; exceptional, and not general; we are the few, and not the majority; strangers and pilgrims, and not established and dominant, waiting for the absent (yet spiritually present) Lord and Bridegroom, who will return and build again the tabernacle of David, and reign in peace and truth.

Our hope is Christ's return. We are not expecting days of peace and sunshine, but of storm and tempest; we are not looking forward to times of safety, of godliness and of truth, but to perilous times, in which worldliness and error shall become strong, attractive, and violent. We expect the days which preceded the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. We

believe God will gather many from among Jews and Gentiles into the Church, and bless His testimony to multitudes, ere the judgment comes. But our hope is nothing less and nothing else than the Lord himself, who shall return to take to Himself the kingdom according to the will of the Father. Our only anxiety, therefore, ought to be to remain faithful and loyal to Him; to maintain truth in its fulness, and in the spirit of love to seek not high or worldly things, but like Jesus himself to rejoice and give thanks when the Father reveals His Son to "babes," and when sinners, however few and obscure, draw near to hear the beloved gospel of divine grace.

How is the Church to fulfil her mission to the world, and to keep herself pure? The purity of the Church is not by isolation, but by aggressiveness; and the victory of the Church is not by world-conformity, but by purity. The more aggressive the Church is, the purer she will remain. The more courageously she attacks the world, the less injury she will receive from the poisonous atmosphere of unbelief and selfishness around her. If the Church wishes to

keep herself unspotted from the world, and to grow in grace and heavenly-mindedness, she must enter into the mind of her Lord, who, sent by the Father, came to seek and to save that which is lost, who went about doing good, and declared to all, Pharisees and publicans, the evangel of divine love. The Church, who feels no compassion for perishing souls, who is not constrained by the love of Him who died for the guilty, who does not walk in the footsteps of the great Deacon who came to minister unto others, has already become worldly; the spirit of selfishness and unbelief has already entered into her heart, and is endangering her very life.

The safety of the Church is in warfare. If she does not attack the world with the peaceful yet powerful weapons of the Spirit, she loses the faith which is the victory that overcometh, and the love which constrains the members of Christ to be ambassadors of the divine gospel. If the light does not shine before men, it will soon be extinguished; if the salt does not benefit the mass, the salt itself will soon be worthless and trodden under foot. The man who obeys not

the command of his leader, and in cowardice and ignoble sloth stays away from the battle, does not merely deprive himself of a share in the joy and reward of victory, but is in danger of losing the approbation of him who has called him to be a soldier.

Thus we find that when the Church was most active she was most prayerful, most fervent in love, most concentrated in her aim, most heavenly-minded and spiritual. Rejoicing in mercy, she was merciful to the needy and sorrowful, the ignorant and guilty; triumphing in love, she was constrained by love to testify of the Saviour, and to direct the erring and perishing sheep to the Good Shepherd. True intensity of love and devotion, and true expansiveness and work, go together. There may be an appearance of activity and influence, a semblance of energy and laborious zeal, without inward collectedness, prayer, and love. There is sometimes an appearance of devotion, spirituality, and fervour, without the ministry of of love and the works of mercy. But where the true light shines within, and the true love dwells in the heart, the Father seeth that

which is in secret, and the world beholds good works; it is when the joy of salvation reigns in the Church that sinners are taught God's ways, and transgressors are brought to repentance and faith.

The Church resists the world by conquering love. She keeps herself pure by going into the world preaching glad tidings by word and work. And in this aggressiveness she is strongest when she is most pure. When loyal to her heavenly Bridegroom, she keeps herself unspotted from the world, she is most skilful and most blessed in gaining souls. She loves the world most, and is her true benefactor, when most obedient to the apostolic precept, "Love not the world." She cannot influence unless her standpoint is heavenly. As Archimedes said, "Give me where I can stand, and I will move the earth," the Church can attract and conquer only when she remembers her heavenly position and character. When we seek the praise, and yield to the spirit of the world, our light loses its light, our salt its savour. David cannot fight with Goliath in Saul's armour. Our sufficiency is of God; our weapons are spiritual.

Let us remember, then, whose we are. Children of the Father, whose philanthropy has appeared in the Lord Jesus Christ; the redeemed children of Jesus, who is the Friend of sinners; the children of the Holy Ghost, who in the Bride calls unto the world, Come! Let us remember that God dwells in us by His love, that Jesus lives in us, when, as His representatives, we continue His mission on earth. Let us beware of morbid quietism and of superficial activity. Sentiment may be dead, as much as works which proceed not from the love of a living heart are lifeless, and without value in God's sight. Let us abide in Christ, and, upheld and nourished by Him in secret, the Father will reward and acknowledge us openly. The faith of our heart will manifest itself in doing the works which Jesus did when He was on earth. Sinners will draw near to hear us; the grace of God will be magnified, and many will rejoice and say, Here is Immanuel, the true and loving presence of Jesus on earth.

Very comprehensive are the comparisons of Scripture to illustrate the wonderful position of the Church of Christ in the world. It is

surely not accidental that these various comparisons comprise the *universe*, all the various spheres of the creation of God. Beginning with the inanimate, the Church is compared to the heavenly bodies, to the celestial luminaries—the Church is called the light of the world, and her ministers stars (Matt. v.; Rev. i.; Dan. xii.) She is compared unto precious stones, reflecting light in beauty; for by the electing love of God, the redemption of Christ, and the transforming power of the Holy Ghost, the saints, who were once children of wrath and disobedience, living in darkness, and without the hope of glory, are now filled with the Spirit, and beautified with the righteousness of Christ, whose image they bear. The Church is compared to a building, believers being living stones, the Saviour himself the foundation. For in the Church is strength and harmony; and while some are pillars able to sustain heavy weight, and chosen to be prominent and attractive, the exercise of love unites all, and renders the whole strong and fortified against the assaults of enemies, and the untoward and inclement influences of a hostile atmosphere.

Between this lowest kingdom of creation and the kingdom of plants, on the boundary line between organic and inorganic, we notice salt and leaven. The Church has power to preserve the world from corruption, and to enter as a chemical, transforming power into the various developments of human life. Rising to a higher sphere, to show that the Church has life, an inherent vitality which manifests itself in growth and in fruit, the Church is compared to a vine, thus showing also, that while each member or believer has individuality, the Church forms one organism, and is vitalised by the same principle and spirit. Ascending still higher, the Church is compared to the net of fishes, the enclosure which out of the waves of the ocean rescues the homeless; to the flock of sheep, emblem of a community guarded by the faithful Shepherd, watched over in love and tenderness. But all these illustrations do not suffice to show forth the true character of the Church. She is therefore compared to man, that wonderful organism, himself a microcosm—to man, created in the image of God. Christ is the Head, the Church is His body. And

in order more clearly to manifest the fulness and greatness of the Church, the various human relationships which God has instituted are used as symbols. Thus marriage is a symbol of the great mystery, Christ and His people, whom He loved and redeemed, and with whom He has betrothed Himself, dwelling in them now by His Spirit, and preparing them for His second coming in glory. The Church is compared to a family in which there are new-born babes, children, young men, fathers; God himself is the Father; Christ the Elder Brother, as well as the Head; apostles and evangelists, fathers in Christ, as well as children and brothers;—a family in which love rules, in which all obey the one Father, and are called to the same inheritance; in which the parents lay up treasure for the children, in which the strong confirm and comfort the weak. The Church is compared to a great household, and to a kingdom, in which faithfulness, diligence, loyalty, and energy benefit the whole, bring glory to the supreme Ruler, and reward to the stewards and messengers of the King.

To unfold the idea of the Church, the Scripture comparisons begin from the lowest sphere and end in the highest, and that in the noblest, fullest, and most developed manifestation, thus teaching us that all the thoughts of God in creation are summed up and transfigured in the Church. Light and purity, beauty and strength, life and love, unity and wisdom, all that the creature can be, shines forth in the Church, chosen of the Father, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and born of the Spirit. And this because the Church is a new creation. She is not of the world; she is from above. She is not the efflorescence of humanity. But Christ, the Lord from heaven, Jesus, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, is her second Adam. She is born in the resurrection of Jesus, who died for her. And hence the Church is compared with Christ himself—"As the Father hath sent me, so have I sent you." We are the sons of God. As He was, so are we in the world. We are to represent and reveal Christ, even as He represented and revealed the Father.

As love is the new commandment of Christ,

so the Church ought to be the home of love—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." The world is not able to understand deep doctrines, and to judge of orthodoxy; nor is it able to enter into the fervent feelings which the disciples of Jesus have when the Saviour manifests unto them His grace. But Christ assures us that love is understood, that the presence of love is felt, that men hear its voice and admire its beauty. He, as love incarnate, went about doing good; He healed the sick, He drove out devils, He conquered evil. And His Church will spread blessings and bring peace and consolation in proportion as she is filled with the love of Jesus, and with the spirit of His ministry. Sound words, fervent feelings, laborious work, are nothing unless we have love, unless we are actuated by the Spirit of Christ. We are not justified by doctrines; neither are we justified by works or sentiments. Christ is our Righteousness, and Christ is our Life. Hence Scripture never speaks of Christianity as a creed or system of doctrine, or even as a principle, but speaks always of Jesus, who in love

died for us, who rose again, and sends the Spirit into our hearts. It speaks of Christ dwelling in us, and of our new resurrection-life in Him. "We live, yet not we, but Christ liveth in us."

The primitive Church dwelt much on the gospels and the Apocalypse. The Church of the Reformation gave great prominence to the epistles.* *Let us return to the gospels, and read them in the Pentecostal light of apostolic teaching.* He only who has died with Christ, and is risen with Him, can follow the Saviour in His life and walk. The natural, unrenewed man cannot follow Jesus; but when we know the grace of the Saviour, and the power of His resurrection, we understand the lessons of His life, and having received the Spirit of Christ, we can live and walk as the sons of God.

"From the life of Jesus," said the old Ger-

* "I have certainly more of the Pauline epistles than of the four gospels in my nature . . . . These epistles presuppose the gospels having been sent to those churches that possessed the materials of the letter. Hence, though for the balancing of truth there is nothing like the Pauline letters, for vitality and freshness there is nothing like the facts of the gospel."—J. DUNAU, "Colloquia Peripatelica," pp. 43, 44.

mans, "we can learn all things." * We can learn Christ; and to know Him is to know all things that pertain unto life and godliness. Let us then continually study Him as the Model; we must represent Christ in our lives.

(1.) And first let us remember the object of Christ's life. He was sent. He never forgot that He came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father that sent Him. He teaches most emphatically and impressively that He had only one aim, one absorbing and dominant idea, one all-pervading law and rule. It was simply to do His Father's will. He subordinates His own individuality, if we may so speak; He came not to do His own will. Motives which in themselves are pure and legitimate, and by which our minds may be naturally and sinlessly actuated, such as benevolence and piety, and interest in the progress of God's kingdom, disappear before the all-important and central desire

* "O Jesus! let Thy whole walk on earth stand before my eye, that I may continually be renewed thereby, and that I may be a savour of life, filled with the fruits of righteousness to them with whom I live and for whom I pray, to the praise and glory of God."—ŒTINGER.

to honour the Father by obeying His command. Jesus spoke the words which He heard of the Father; He did the works which the Father showed Him; He spake and acted whenever He knew that "the hour was come," the hour which the Father had appointed. Thus was He constantly the Servant of God, the Representative of the Father, continually and in all things showing forth the glory of God, and executing His command. Thus we are sent by Jesus; and all that we are and have, all our words and works, are to be viewed in the light of mission and service; we are Christ's, even as Christ was sent of the Father.

In this unity and concentration of purpose was the strength of Jesus. His heart was *united*, as the Psalmist says, to praise God. "One thing I do," was in the fullest sense of the word true of the Saviour. And it was this exclusive reference to the Father, this living before Him and unto Him, which rendered the character and acts of Jesus enigmatic and obnoxious to the world, and sometimes unintelligible and mysterious to His own disciples. How difficult is it for us to understand Him, who even in the

good which He did sought not His own delight, and followed not His own thought, but simply the Father's glory and honour, the accomplishment of His will and purpose; who went into sufferings and death simply that the Scripture should be fulfilled, that the Father's commandment should be obeyed. The Church of Christ is to live as sent by Christ, to be subordinate and obedient, and entirely consecrated to the Master, as He was to His heavenly Father.

(2.) Jesus came in lowliness. Although He belonged to the royal house of David, He was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. His birth, infancy, childhood, and youth are characterised by the emblems of poverty and obscure humility. What a contrast between the power and splendour of Cæsar Augustus and the glory of the Roman Empire, and Bethlehem, the small town of Judea, and the Infant who was born there of the poor and humble daughter of David. She offered a pair of turtle-doves, because she was not rich enough to bring a lamb (Luke ii. 24; Lev. xii. 8). Jesus was

called Nazarene, brought up in the despised Nazareth, that thus the whole tenor of prophecy might be fulfilled, which described Him as a root out of a dry ground, as coming in lowliness, without earthly pomp and power. Between the manger of Bethlehem and the humble home of Nazareth and His death on the cross, when He was numbered with the transgressors, we find nothing else but humility, poverty, and lowliness. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

What are we to learn from this? Are we not to follow the Master? We may not be poor, but we are to love poverty. We ought not to trust in earthly riches and honour, in the things which the world esteems and pursues; we ought to remember that our influence and our power are spiritual, and that the garment of the true Church is that of a servant, of a stranger and pilgrim. When the Church becomes rich and strong, esteemed by the world, and dominant, the salt is in danger of losing its savour; spiritual objects are sought in a worldly spirit,

and the mystery of the cross is obscured and forgotten.

For to the end of this dispensation the Church is as a widow, desolate and despised. She is hated of the world. But it is poor and persecuted Smyrna which, by her Christlike poverty, maketh many rich. The glory of the Church is inward; the King's daughter, the bride of Christ, is all-glorious within.

(3.) Jesus was the Son of God. He came from above. He was poor, and yet all things were His; He was lowly, and yet all power was given to Him in heaven and earth, for He was the only-begotten of the Father. The Father was always with Him, and heard Him always. Thus the Church is born of God, of incorruptible seed. Her life is none other but the life of Christ, the risen Head, the life of the Spirit who dwelleth in us. We exert influence and power in the world simply by our being blameless and harmless, *the sons of God*, living Christ's life (which comes only out of the death and the crucifixion of the old man), manifesting the divine nature of which *we* are partakers who have escaped the corruption that

is in the world through lust (Phil. ii., 2 Pet. i.) The Church declares every Lord's day that the resurrection of Christ is her birthday, the source of her life and hope, and thus preaches to the world both the condemnation of the flesh, the utter helplessness of the first Adam and his seed, and the new and heavenly life, which in the only-begotten of the Father, and the first-begotten of the dead, has come to all believers.

(4.) In this lowliness and in this power with love and sympathy the Church is able to go to the whole world, announcing substance in the midst of emptiness and vain shadows, eternal life and consolation in the midst of death and sorrow, peace to the heavy-laden conscience, love to the aching and thirsting heart, forgiveness and renewal, health and joy to the wounded and contrite. And while she loves all and intercedes for all, she is filled, like her Master, with a special love, intense and tender, for the brethren, towards His own who are in the world, and who are gathered to the Bishop and Shepherd of souls. Thanking God, as Jesus did, for the disciples whom the Father gives, she watches over the young

and inexperienced, the weak and tempted, the lonely and afflicted. She seeks to build up, to cherish, and to gladden the heritage of God, the fellow-heirs of life eternal.

The Church is Christlike—sent from above, having one aim and motive, in lowliness, in divine power, in love and ministry. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Likewise ought we to be able to say, He that hath seen the Church hath seen Christ.

Christ is all in all, yet every member of the body, every Christian, has an individual life, work, calling, a name of his own, a position and talent assigned to him, for which he is responsible to the Master. Let *your* light so shine, saith He who is The Light. He means the light which God has given to each of us individually, according to our natural disposition and experience; the special *charisma* which we have received, be it knowledge or patience, or strength or skill, be it intellectual, or moral, or social. In each of us Christ is formed. We possess some feature of His character, some gift of His Spirit, some power

and influence out of His fulness. Each of us is placed in a position, surrounded by opportunities and endowed with gifts. Each one is individual, peculiar; no one else can do what the Master, the great Householder, has appointed and given him to be and do. Let us remember that we are to let *our* light shine. We are never taught in Scripture to sever our privileges and our gifts from our responsibility, or to forget in our high position the dangers with which we are surrounded, and the faithfulness which the Lord expects from us. Hence, when Christ calls us the light of the world, He immediately adds the command; when He calls us the salt of the earth, He immediately adds the most solemn warning. We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, that we should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us.

Let us resemble the blessed Master in His loving wisdom, which directed men to what is easy and simple to understand. Only the eye of faith can see that which is secret, spiritual, and rooted in the heart; but all can see the *manifestations* of love. Perhaps we dwell too much upon one aspect of the

truth, according to which the world is not able to understand the mystery of godliness; but certainly Christ has not sent us into the world to present something to it that it cannot understand. It is perfectly true that until the Spirit of God opens their eyes men do not see Jesus; but in one sense they are able to see, to judge, to appreciate; the world is able to understand our message, and to see our good works; they can acknowledge the influence of God in our lives and conduct; and the Lord Jesus says, that our great object ought to be so to let our light shine before men, that they may behold our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.

When meditating on the Church, we are always in danger of forgetting our own duty. Let us remember that, although the Church forms a unity, this unity is so wonderful that each part of the Church is, as it were, again a whole. Let us avoid any feverish impatience or indolent waiting for a sign from heaven. Let us rather believe that the Lord is doing His work, and carrying out His purposes of

wisdom and love. Our own duty is clear before us. As the apostle says, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which He hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Our individual duty is not a matter of choice. It is as little a matter of choice as was our birthplace. Fixed from all eternity, the path of obedience comes down from the throne of God, close to our very feet. The sphere of action has been prepared for us, the good works which we are to perform have been ordained before, and there in that path the Lord manifests Himself secretly unto each of His disciples. If a man loves Him, and keeps His commandments, Jesus has promised that He and the Father will love him, and that they will come and manifest themselves unto him. Although this is a *secret* path, it is *luminous*. When we walk in the good works which are ordained for us from all eternity, then are we the lights of the world. While we are thus each one walking separately, as it were, alone, let us remember that we are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses, and that all the children of God are with us on the same path, that we are up-

held by their sympathy, remembered in their prayers; all the different activities, all the manifold sufferings, of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ are blended in perfect harmony, until at last the blessed consummation shall be made manifest, when Jesus and the Bride shall be revealed in glory.

In that eternal home, communion with God and communion with all saints and angels are blended together in such perfection as transcends our present knowledge, because as yet we know so little of the depths of that blessed and fundamental truth—GOD IS LOVE.

VIII.

LIFE IN THE CHURCH;

(THE CHURCH VISIBLE AND ORGANIZED).

SERMON VIII.

LIFE IN THE CHURCH.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—MATT. xxviii. 19, 20.

THE history of the apostolic Church is the guide-book of the Church of every age. The Holy Ghost has not given us a record of the subsequent history of Christ's people, and we are convinced that the description of the apostolic Church given to us by the Spirit is all that we need for our instruction and encouragement. In reading this book, we feel both sorrow and shame. It seems like reading of a "paradise lost," of a beautiful garden, fragrant and fruitful, from which we are banished. And yet there is something morbid in this feeling. God loves us as truly and tenderly as He loved His

disciples then, and the Holy Ghost, who is mentioned fifty times in this book of the fiftieth (the Pentecostal) day, is ours also, dwelling in us, and abiding with us according to the Saviour's assurance. We ought, therefore, to read this book, not merely with sorrow and shame, but with gratitude and joy, and with the full and hopeful purpose of a living and spiritual imitation.

The great error one is liable to fall into is, that our age and our circumstances are so different from those of the primitive churches that comparison is inappropriate and imitation impossible. It began with miracle, but it is continued in a natural way. Truth and error are mixed in this. The word miracle is ambiguous. It began with and in the *Spirit*, and it is to continue thus. The Church is herself a miracle, miraculous in her life, strength, and influence. Let us always confirm each other in this: the Church is a tree, whose Root is in heaven and not on earth; our vitality is the Holy Ghost.

What were the characteristic features of the apostolic Church?

We read that the Pentecostal congregation of

Jerusalem continued stedfast in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Deeply rooted and grounded in the knowledge and love of Christ, they cast forth their roots as Lebanon, their branches spread extensively; there were continually added to their number true believers. The Church extends when she is intense in her spiritual life; she spreads when she deepens; she expands by concentration. He that seeth in secret acknowledges and rewards His people openly. When God is in the midst of us, then the power of His presence and love will be felt by the world around us.

We are told that the Church of Jerusalem was regarded by the people with awe and with favour. This twofold, and apparently contradictory, impression is very instructive. It shows that the Church manifested both the holiness and the love of God. Lo, God is Love! let us adore. When God reveals Himself, reverence and awe fill the heart of man. But the Holy One of Israel is also our Redeemer, and the sunlight of peace, pardon and favour fills our souls with hope and joy. As the inner circle

of the Church thus adores in love, the outer circle of hearers and inquirers receive the twofold impression. They are solemnised, yet attracted; fear falls upon them, but not a petrifying and sterile dread, but the fear with which the element of affection, longing, and repentance is blended.

The apostolic Church was full of joy and peace in believing, by the power of the Holy Ghost. They had received the Word gladly (Acts ii. 4), and this feature of rejoicing faith characterised them also afterwards. For can faith be without joy? Is not assurance of acceptance not so much an efflorescence as an inherent essential element of faith? Is not thanksgiving the necessary and immediate consequence of accepting the unspeakable gift? The reality of apostolic faith explains their joyousness and their heavenly-mindedness. It was evident that they were walking in the light of God's countenance, and that they were glad because the good news filled their hearts with peace and hope. It was evident that their affections were centred in Jesus, who delivered them from the wrath to come, and whom they were

expecting to return from heaven, to give unto them the inheritance. Faith is trust, and surely not doubt. It is a confiding, peaceful, and rejoicing rest in Jesus. It is a calm but sure and lively hope of seeing Him, and being with Him. Little faith is to be treated with kindness and patience, yet not to be encouraged, but upbraided, according to the Lord's example, and to be brought to the firm rock of divine promise. But doubt-faith, the product of a languid, world-conforming age, is not to be tolerated. It is self-contradictory, and it is often a cloak to conceal the undecided and divided state of the heart, which in reality has not repented, and has not accepted the Saviour. The apostolic Christians believed, they trusted in Jesus; and they knew Him in whom they believed, and rejoiced in Him who was their loving Redeemer, and who was coming again to give them the kingdom.

The apostolic Church was the home of Love. Jesus was their centre. In Him they were one. The Lord's Supper was the continual expression and confirmation of this family union. Their fellowship was with the Father and the Lord

and with one another. The filial spirit is also fraternal. A brotherhood, a community of interests, a co-operation and harmonious blending of gifts and power, such as the Church manifested, had never been realised by statesmen, or even imagined by political and social reformers. In the realm of instinct, the only parallel is the bee-hive : there all are one, labouring together, having no separate interest, and no self-centred skill or diligence. Our own body is another illustration. For if one member suffers, the whole body suffers, and the whole organism is animated by the same spirit. Thus is it in the Church. Christ is the Head, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working of the measure in every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in *love*. Where Christ's Spirit is, there love dwells and reigns. Love, rooted in the heart, strong, sweet, and tender ; love in deed and in truth, manifesting itself in the words of consolation, counsel, and encouragement, and in the deeds of help and self-sacrifice.

It is only a proof of the genuineness of apostolic faith, joy, and love that their life was calm. There was no feverish excitement, no violent alternations of joy and grief, of strength and lassitude. "They did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." As a well of water, not stagnant, yet not boisterous, clear and free, strong and spontaneous, even and perennial—thus was the spiritual life in the early Christians.

But it may be asked, Is it right to forget, in describing the apostolic Church, the failings and sins, the imperfections and grievous blemishes, which are narrated in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles? It would be indeed wrong to omit the consideration of these facts, so faithfully worded for our instruction; but this will only add strength to what has already been said.

We read, indeed, of sins and abuses in the apostolic Churches. As immediately after the entrance of Israel into the promised land there was the sin of Achan and the divine judgment on the transgressor; so at the very commencement of the apostolic Church, we read of the

sin of Ananias and Sapphira, and of the holy anger of God, who punished them with His sore displeasure. From the exhortations which the apostles addressed to the various congregations, it is evident that most lamentable offences and grievous sins needed to be rebuked. But how strong and vigorous must have been in the Church the life of faith and the realisation of Jesus! Apostles never recede from the high ground and the spiritual method of the gospel. They never lower the standard of gospel liberty, nor introduce the restrictions and methods of a legal spirit to check sin. When they rebuke the sin of uncleanness, it is by reminding the Corinthians of the highest Christian mystery, the fullest and deepest gospel blessing, viz., our union with Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. To the same high and heavenly source is traced the command, "Lie not one to another." The abuses which had crept into the celebration of the Lord's Supper are not met by any outward discipline and regulation, by advising the less frequent observance of this Christian feast, but by a renewed exposition of the solemnity and nature of the institution. Thus did the

apostles exercise full confidence in the strength and intense vitality of the faith of their converts. Thus did they with noble courage and wisdom discard all external and legal methods, and rely exclusively on the power of the Holy Ghost in the Church, on Christ dwelling in the hearts of believers. It were a very shortsighted mistake to measure the real soul-condition of apostolic Christians by the blemishes and spots which appeared among them. Often the radical evil of unbelief and apathy co-exists with the outward forms of propriety and decorum.

Another peculiarity of the apostolic Church, and intimately connected with spirituality, is the combination of liberty and order. As the apostles were commissioned to teach all that Christ had commanded them, so they were especially careful not to add any commandments of their own, and to watch that the precepts of Christ were obeyed in the spirit of liberty, as unto the Lord, and from an intelligent and loving conviction. They left, therefore, everything to the power of truth, and relied on the testimony of the Spirit, and not on their authority. Thus the Council of Jerusalem did not issue an

edict legislative in its tone, but expressed the view to which the meeting of apostles, elders, and brethren had come under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, leaving it to the same Spirit to convince the Churches, and to produce an harmonious conformity. In the same manner the question of the observance of days was treated—in short, all questions which did not involve the vital truths of Christ's salvation.

As to the meetings of churches and the preaching of the gospel there was likewise diversity, individuality, freedom. All gifts were encouraged; evangelists and deacons went forth to preach and to baptize. But yet there was no disorder. The unity of the Church was always remembered. There is one body and one Spirit. When Saul of Tarsus was converted by the direct intervention of the Lord, he was directed to go to Ananias, and to be baptized by him. Christ honoured the Visible Church. When the evangelist Philip preached in Samaria, and many received the gospel there, the apostles went down from Jerusalem, and the new community was linked to the Church of Jerusalem.

If in modern times we find it difficult to combine order and unity with liberty and individualism, it is because we do not sufficiently rely on the inherent power of the Spirit of God, and the deep bond of union which connects all believers, and because we do not sufficiently feel the paramount importance of love. Our want of union is not owing so much to our overrating the importance of our differences, as to our not estimating sufficiently the all-importance of the vital points in which we are agreed.

Looking from earth heavenward, all believers are priests, and through their divine Mediator and High Priest they have access by one Spirit unto the Father, and offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

But while there is no intervening priesthood or mediation between earth and heaven, the Lord Jesus blesses, feeds and rules the flock through the *ministry* of believers, chosen and set apart for the solemn work. Equal as all believers are as to their acceptance with God, and the blessings and privileges of the new covenant, they differ as to wisdom and strength.

According to the very nature of things, and the distinct teaching of Scripture, the Church consists of teachers, rulers, shepherds, overseers, and of the believers who are taught and ruled over. Jesus himself commanded Peter and the other apostles to feed the flock. The Apostle Paul appointed in every church elders, men who were apt to teach, and whose character and gifts qualified them to take charge of the congregation. He commanded Timothy to follow this example everywhere. And while the bishops and elders are exhorted to remember the high and solemn work to which they are set apart, the congregations are continually reminded to obey and honour those who labour among them, and watch for their souls, and who must give an account of their stewardship to the Lord, who appointed them.

Nor is it sufficient to look upon this institution as arising merely out of the necessities of the case, or commending itself to our wisdom and prudence. We must regard it as a divine appointment, as the will and gift of our adorable Saviour. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edify-

ing of the body of Christ—that is, for the highest, most essential, and glorious purposes, and till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ—that is, until the return of Jesus in glory, Christ gives to the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph. iv. 4–16). The foundation on which the Christian ministry rests is the command of Christ; its source is the ascended Lord. He holdeth the seven stars in His right hand. The object of the ministry is the ingathering of souls, and the edifying of the body of Christ. The permanence of the ministry comprises the whole dispensation. The existence of the ministry does not merely not militate with the unity and equality of believers, but it is for the very purpose of promoting and strengthening it. It is because there is one body, one Spirit, and one Father, and the Church is ultimately to be a perfect man, that Christ gives various ministers and stewards to His house.

It is *men* whom He gives. He does not send

apostolic, prophetic, pastoral, evangelistic, and teaching *gifts* to the congregation *en masse*, manifesting themselves in one individual to-day, and in another member on some other occasion. The Church is not a uniform mass, in which some part is an eye to-day, and only for the day, and then sinks back into a less noble or important position. The Church is a body, in which there are eyes and ears and hands, in which various members have assigned to them various positions and functions, for the benefit and health of the whole. Christ gave some men to be apostles, pastors, evangelists, &c. There were rulers, known and acknowledged and obeyed. They may have been more or less faithful and vigilant, they may have been remiss and forgetful, and needing sometimes the exhortation to attend to their ministry; but their position was definite, even as their responsibility was. It is true that the apostles, and all God-sent ministers, evangelists, elders, never think of having dominion over the Christian's faith, but only wish to be helpers of their joy. It is true that all their authority and influence is spiritual, by the Word and in love, and that

their discipline is in the spirit of brotherly union. But while they bring the flock continually into contact with the Lord, with His voice and His command—while their object is to commend themselves to the conscience and heart of the people, and to beseech and influence them by the mercies of God, *their authority is not derived from the Church, but from Christ.* They rely on the Spirit proving their apostleship to the congregation; but they themselves know who sent them, who gave them the message of reconciliation, and who entrusted them with the oversight of God's heritage.

Jesus is Lord and Head of the Church. All fulness dwells in Him. Of Him is all ministry. He is the true Apostle sent of the Father (John xvii. 18; Heb. iii. 1). He is the Prophet of whom Moses spake as the perfect, ultimate, and royal Teacher of God's people (Acts iii. 22). He is the Evangelist, who announces the good tidings of great joy (Luke xxiv. 4). Who but He is the Shepherd, the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the chief Shepherd? (John x. 10; Heb. xii.; 1 Pet. v.) Christ therefore,

through His servants, ministers to His people. And as the men who minister are given and upheld by Him, so His Spirit authorises and endears them to the hearts of the people, and establishes a strong and tender bond of confidence and affection. If even the Apostle Paul referred to the spiritual power and result of his ministry as his apostolic authority against gainsayers (though he also asserted the divine mission which he had received from Christ), may not we in like manner say, Whoever doubts our position in the Church of Christ, those among whom we labour know who hath sent us? And is not this in accordance with the spiritual character of the New Testament dispensation? We have no Levitical priesthood, no authority derived by physical or ecclesiastical descent; the apostolic succession is of the Spirit, who breatheth where it pleaseth Him, and whose work can only be spiritually discerned.

In the apostolic epistles we find full and minute directions given concerning the character, conduct, duties, and responsibilities of presbyters or bishops, and of deacons. We find no directions concerning apostles and prophets.

From this we infer that the episcopate or eldership, and the diaconate, are permanent and normal offices in the Church, and that in this respect the apostolic model ought to be copied in all Christian congregations during this dispensation. In Jerusalem, in every church which was founded by the Apostle Paul, we find elders who directed the congregations, ruled over them, watched over their spiritual welfare, instructed them in the Word of God. Chosen for their zeal and eminent knowledge and devotion, they were charged to walk as ensamples to the flock—to exhort, rebuke, encourage—to visit the sick, and to take heed to the congregation over whom the Holy Ghost placed them as overseers. As their duties and responsibilities were most grave and solemn, the people are exhorted then to honour them, and to render them affectionate obedience.

This institution of elders or overseers, which, based on Old Testament indications, was established in the synagogue, was thus introduced by the apostles, and is in harmony with the whole spirit of Scripture, while it obviously is adapted to the necessities and wants of the

Church, both as regards her inner development and her relations to the world. The various gifts which are needed for teaching, for discipline, for the ministration of counsel, comfort, or rebuke, are thus exercised by men who have approved themselves to the Church; and questions of difficulty and delicacy are considered and decided by those, who possess the confidence and esteem of the people, and who, set apart by prayer, are upheld by the constant prayer of the flock. And while there are thus elders or guides, the development of gifts in the Church is part of their duty, as well as their joy and reward. Their aim and object is to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Their joy is to see children born, and the new-born children grow and become strong, and young men become fathers and pillars in the Church.

Let us value all divine ordinances and apostolic methods. He who has instituted the family has also ordained the congregation. True, He blesses every individual apart, and the lonely Christian will receive from the gracious Head of the Church all needful grace.

But it is His will that, as a family, as a brotherhood, as an organised congregation in fellowship one with another, and with the whole Church, we should worship, grow and labour, that thus we may continually give and receive, exercising the ministry of love, and receiving one another in the name of Christ.

What is the work of the Christian congregation?

The first great object of the Church is *worship*. God is the hearer of prayer—"All flesh shall come unto Him." But while all men are encouraged and commanded to cry unto the Lord, it is only the Church who worships in spirit and in truth; it is only believers who are a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. The Church alone enters into the Holy of holies. In her alone God is praised, for in her alone God, the Triune, is known and adored. God is worshipped in heaven by the angels and by the perfected saints, and on earth by those who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, believe in the Lord Jesus. There is a special blessing promised to believers met in the name

of Jesus. The Saviour himself is with them, praising the Father in the midst of the congregation. The meetings of believers on earth correspond thus with the never-ceasing and perfect worship in heaven. The worship of the Church is the only worship on earth. It is one with the adoration of the heavenly Sanctuary. In union with all angels and perfected saints, we praise God, and worship the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; as in heaven, so on earth the song is heard—"Worthy is the Lamb!"

Worship ought to be our chief object and joy in our meetings. For worship is the characteristic feature of the Church. The spirit of worship ought to manifest itself in all things connected with our assemblies. Solemnity and joy ought to mark our very entrance into the meeting of God's saints. The presence of Christ realised will vitalise our song and prayer, our reading of God's Word, our preaching and hearing of the gospel. Those who are yet strangers to God's grace will feel that God is indeed in the midst of us. Adoration will be the undercurrent of all our acts. The declaration of God's message will also be a magnifying of

God's name; it will be received with thanksgiving and supplication, and the traditional "amen" at the end of our sermons will be the outward expression of the solemn prayer-character which all true preaching ought to possess.

It is from worship, from communion with the Father and the Son, that the congregation is to go forth into the life of the week, with its duties and trials, and with its opportunities of witnessing for Christ and showing forth the Saviour's love.

The Church, renewed every Lord's day in her resurrection-life, will then during the week live and work for the Master. None will be isolated. Friendship will be irradiated by a heavenly light, and consecrated to the furtherance of faith and growth in grace. In answer to prayer, paths of usefulness will be opened, and the various gifts of grace will be used in seeking the lost and cherishing the lambs within the fold.

In the Church is endless variety. Not every believer is like a stately cedar or majestic oak, but the tiniest flower shows forth God's praise. The gold of Sheba and the cup of cold water are

alike to the glory and joy of God. Some have the gift of knowledge, profound wisdom in meek and lowly hearts, others excel in the ministry of love, in acts of kindness and brotherly help. Some have the gift of prayer and the priestly heart of intercession; others are sons of consolation to the afflicted. Some are led into deep views of sin and high views of divine sovereignty and grace; others walk in the lower yet divine valley of the peace-breathing promises of the Saviour's grace. Here we have manifold life and beauty; the hosannahs of little children and the wisdom of Paul the aged; Peter, the man of rock-like firmness and strength; John, leaning on the Saviour's bosom in loving adoration. Mary anoints the body of Christ for His burial, and the Master pronounces her praise, "She hath done what she could." Onesiphorus refreshes Paul, and is not ashamed of his chain. All glorify Him; one Spirit inhabits them; they are constrained by one love.

In the Church there is constant growth. The natural year has four seasons, but the year of grace has many more. Here is an infinite

variety of life-processes, seed-times and harvests. And as in a garden there is a constant succession of life-manifestation engaging the interest and care of the gardener, so the Church presents a wonderfully multiform history. Here are also constant accessions. From the wild moorland, from the barren wilderness, new souls are brought and planted into the garden of Christ. Into the true Vine and the goodly Olive-tree sinners are grafted by the Spirit of God. The peaceful and sacred shelter of God's love receives continually new inhabitants.

The Church is God's delight and His unremitting care. The Father's eye is always watching it in loving-kindness; the Saviour's high-priestly intercession is never-ceasing; the Holy Ghost is continually watering and renewing it. But there are special seasons of refreshing from before the presence of the Lord. Then we feel that Jesus has visited us. We hear His voice, "*I am come* into my garden." When the north wind awakes, and the south wind comes and blows upon the garden, and the hearts of God's people are full of thanksgiving and prayer

—when the Word of God is precious, His promise sweet, His command sacred—when prayer is spiritual, preaching real, and fellowship among saints loving and faithful. "It is the Lord!" says every leaf and every flower. "It is the Lord!" say faith, and love, and hope. "It is the Lord!" exclaims the minister of the Word, as new light and love fill his soul. "He is come into His garden," respond the people, with hearts burning within them. Duty neglected says, "It is the Lord!" and rises with new vigour; confession of sin, long silent, now bursts forth, melted by the rays of divine mercy; love to a crucified Redeemer, which lay sleeping, now awakes. "It is the Lord!" say the children of God, and the beauty of God shines upon them. The world sees the Church, and is attracted by it.

How many new errors, theoretic and practical, are around us! Our wants and difficulties seem complicated and perplexing. But we have only one remedy—to follow Christ; and only one method—to be filled with the Spirit.

There is a craving in man for something solemn, festive, joyous. If God's Spirit is

poured out upon us, the services of the Lord's day, born out of the life and loving fellowship and fervent prayer of the week, will be solemn, joyous, festive. Meeting in the name of Jesus, and expecting the divine answer to prayer, minister, office-bearers, and members of the Church will have a feast. It need not be said of them, "They have no wine." His love is better than wine: as true Christians they are anointed with the oil of gladness; and to their number God will add many, even as many as are ordained to life eternal.

Let us elders thus feed the flock of God which is among us; and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Let us all continue steadfast in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship and in prayers and in breaking of bread. Let us serve the Lord with gladness, and let us remember His dying love till He come.

IX.

HEATHENISM.

SERMON IX.*

HEATHENISM.

"Teach all nations."—MATT. xxviii. 19.

THESE words bring before us the subject of heathenism, and the relation of the Church of Christ to the heathen world.† The words of our Lord are our authority as well as our encouragement for engaging in the great work of heathen mission. He himself is the Sender. It is a work which is essential; it is, in one aspect, and if we take a wide enough view of its meaning, *the* work of the Christian Church. Christian congregations are the result of apostolic obedi-

* This sermon was preached on the day set apart in the English Presbyterian Churches for prayer and collection on behalf of the mission in China and India. I have left it unaltered, which accounts for some allusions, and for the hortatory style of address.

† The mission of the apostles to Israel is included in these words of Christ, and needed no special mention here. Comp. Acts i. 8.

ence to Christ's command; the Church continues, expands, and flourishes by abiding in the missionary spirit, attitude, and activity.

The Word of God does not give us light merely about the central question of salvation. The Word of God, in revealing God in Jesus Christ, throws light upon all the circumference of which the salvation in Christ Jesus is the centre.

Heathenism is revealed to us in Scripture in its origin and in its nature. The history of humanity is not, as some imagine, a gradual ascent, a gradual emerging out of the night of barbarism and idolatry into a clearer and purer knowledge, and into a more refined and cultivated state of existence; but the history of the human race, apart from the interference of the grace of God, is a downward descent, accelerated often by a crisis, by a judgment, brought on by the more full manifestation of the opposition which is in the heart of man against God and His truth. There are revealed to us in Scripture three catastrophes at the very commencement of the history of our race—the fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise, the deluge in the time of Noah, and the destruction of the Tower of

Babel, and in the record of these three catastrophes and judgments, at the beginning of our history, we possess a clue which enables us to unravel, to some extent, the difficulties presented to us in the history of the world. The fall of Adam in Paradise accounts for the general prevalence of sin and of death. The Deluge, and the rescue of Noah and his family, account to us for the physical condition of the earth, which God has promised to preserve until the judgment by fire, giving to us in the rainbow a pledge of His never-failing faithfulness and clemency, and upholding those seasons of summer and winter, and alternations of heat and cold, and of day and night, which are necessary for our well-being. The building of the Tower of Babel, and the judgment with which God visited the insurrection of man against His authority, account to us for all *national* history, for the origin of languages and of nations, and for that multiform existence in which human thought and life has since shown itself. Without the record of these three catastrophes we should not be able to understand the universal prevalence of sin and suffering, the present state and

destiny of the earth, and the history of nations.

God created man in His image. God taught man in His wisdom and in His love. Man was not left in some far distant corner of the realm of God, gradually and slowly to find his way out of the darkness and night into the sunshine of divine favour. But he was brought up with God, and as the Lord Jesus tells us in the parable, he was the younger son who, having known the Father, and having enjoyed all the bounty of the Father, in proud independence left the Father's house, and took all that belonged unto him into a far country, and, as a necessary and inevitable consequence of this mother-sin, fell into transgression and vice, into pollution, misery, and wretchedness. Men knew God at the beginning, because God had revealed Himself unto them; but because they did not honour God, and were not thankful, they failed to retain the knowledge of God in their hearts; and thus it is that they sank into ignorance and darkness, and lapsed into barbarism and degradation. "The nations," as the psalmist says, "*forgat* God." God had

given them light, but they apostatised from God; and this is the origin of heathenism. The history of the world begins in a state of civilisation and culture, begins with knowledge, begins with the manifestation of God in light and in love. It goes, on account of the sinfulness of man, from this beautiful mountain-height down into the dark and low valley of man's own thought, and of man's own will. With the Tower of Babel began heathenism, as well as nationalism; and it is one of the significant peculiarities of the Hebrew language that the same word means nations and heathen. All the nations originated in heathenism. That unity of language which the world possessed, before the Tower of Babel, was only a symbol of the inward unity which was rooted in the conscience and heart, in their allegiance to the one God who created the heaven and the earth. From being simply a union of families and of tribes, humanity became divided into nations and languages. It was because they had lost that only point of union, and that only central force which can bring and keep together all the children of

Adam as one harmonious and loving household—even as on the day of Pentecost the very first manifestation of the Spirit which came from the exalted Saviour, the second Adam, the glorified Son of man, was this, that it united the people of different languages to hear and understand the heavenly message, the Word of God, the Father's salvation, and to praise God in unity of heart and in harmony of voice.

The Tower of Babel is, therefore, the beginning of heathenism. From that time God left the nations to themselves. Now began the times of ignorance. Babylon is the beginning and also the representative of heathenism. Have you not noticed that as soon as Babel is judged and destroyed, Abraham is elected. As soon as the children of Israel, on account of their disobedience, deserve to be chastised, Babylon again in the person of Nebuchadnezzar appears in power; and only when that last Babylon of which we read in the Scripture, the concentration and consummation of man's opposition against God, shall be finally judged, shall all the nations of the earth, as David and the prophets by faith anticipated, join the chosen people of God,

Israel, and worship Him in the beauty of holiness.

Now, with regard to the times of ignorance, there are three elements which modify the dense darkness which covers the earth. In the first place, there is the reminiscence of the primeval revelation. All the ancient traditions of nations, however diverse those nations may be in their geographical situation, in their language, and in the degree of cultivation which they have attained, show a wonderful harmony in the reminiscences which they possess that man was once in a state of blessedness, that man by his guilt fell out of this state of felicity, that a great Redeemer, Restorer, Deliverer, will be sent into the nations, who will bring back unto us purity, peace, and prosperity. That first promise which God gave to Eve and Adam in Paradise, about the seed of the woman that should bruise the head of the serpent, finds itself, though obscured and mixed up with error, in all the traditions of nations; and so there were left unto them, as it were, fragments of divine truth.

The second element which in some degree

alleviates the great oppressiveness and gloom of their ignorance is that, as Sophocles expressed it, "There are the unwritten laws of heaven in the hearts of men, which are not of to-day or yesterday, whose birthtide is not known to any man." *

God has implanted within man (as we say, in the conscience) a knowledge of justice, of truth, of purity, of equity. So distinct is this voice, so powerful and authoritative is this testimony, that God says that the heathen nations are without excuse; because, although they have not the written law, yet, according to their own conviction and conscience, they have the unwritten law, which no human power can obliterate; and whose righteousness no human sophistry can gainsay. †

* "It was not Zeus who heralded these words,
Nor Justice, help-meet of the gods below.
'Twas they who ratified those other laws,
And set their record in the human heart.
. . . . . .
The unwritten and unchanging laws of heaven,
They are not of to-day or yesterday;
But ever live, and no one knows their birthtide."
—"Antigone," p. 448, &c.

† "When the nations were dispersed from the Tower of Babel, they took few traditions with them; it seems as if they

The third element is this, that God by the Holy Ghost, who bloweth where He listeth, had His work among the Gentile nations. I need only remind you of Melchisedek, who was a priest of the Most High God; of Job in the land of Uz, who feared the Lord and walked in His commandments; of the Ninevites, unto whom the message of Jonah was sent. These are only instances and samples of many others to whom the Lord in His sovereignty, and by His Holy Spirit, revealed Him-

commenced their wanderings by drinking out of Lethe. . . . But the fundamental features of religion are so deeply grounded in the actual relation of man to God, that even when forgotten for a while they assert themselves again. Man feels the presence of the All-governing Spirit, and his own distance from Him, as well as a longing to appease the punishing power of deity, and to obtain peace. He feels that sin is sin, and subject to divine judgment, that it can only be removed by suffering, and that only by humiliation, self-surrender, and willing self-sacrifice we can be lifted out of the depth of our condition. Such are the original fundamental thoughts of the sacrifice for sin in its manifold manifestations.

"The fountain-head of religion is not in the reasoning mind, but the voice of God in the conscience, not the excited and anguished imagination, but the instinct of gratitude and loyalty to the Giver of all good. Faith in God's existence is not left to man's free choice, but man possesses it ere he chooses, and can suppress it only by a criminal effort."—THIERSCH.

self, and whom He drew by the cords of His love. Yet the times before the Advent were the times of ignorance; darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.

While we cannot cultivate sufficiently the spirit of humility, which is always a spirit of tenderness, compassion, and love, we must not regard the judgments that are denounced in Scripture against heathenism and the nations that forget God as unjust and hard. Nothing in the Bible is harsh and severe. I do not admit for a single moment that there is anything else in the Bible but candour and justice and generosity, and a wonderfully bountiful and tender love. The light in which heathenism is revealed in Scripture, although it is truthful, is also affectionate. What more ideal view can we take of heathenism, than that view which the Apostle Paul propounds when he is speaking to the Athenians. With the insight of love, he seizes on all the vestiges of moral light and life which could be traced in their literature and temples; and while declaring to them their ignorance, and stating to them the fundamental truths concerning God the Creator, the

spiritual nature of worship, the unity of the race, and the redemption in Christ Jesus, he willingly acknowledges that among them also there had been heart-longings and presentiments —souls thirsting after the living water.

The Bible is full of truth, and full of affection. Whatever there is pure and lovely and ideal among the heathen nations, think not that it is our interest, or that it is the spirit of Christianity and Scripture, to ignore it, or to make little of it. Even the wild-flower has its beauty, and God is the God of all, and there is nothing good or beautiful but it has its origin in God's Spirit. Jesus is the desire of all nations. And as for the judgment of the heathen, let our sceptics and cavillers only know this truth, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, and for Tyre and Sidon, in that day, than for our wise philosophers who reject the light of the gospel, and when the crucified Jesus is preached unto them, turn away from Him as foolishness. God will judge the whole earth in righteousness and in mercy—with calmness, truth, and justice.

During the times of ignorance, when, accord-

ing to divine wisdom, the Gentile nations were left to themselves, God raised up a bright light in Israel. Israel then became the chosen nation, and to Israel was given the light of revelation.

Let me briefly remind you of what Israel knew. Israel knew that there was God. Do you think that a small thing? Oh, how much is embraced in that knowledge that there is God! Think not that the essence of heathenism consists in polytheism—in having many gods. That is merely an accident. Whether it be that there are many gods worshipped, or that there is only one created element deified; or that, even without this being done, the whole spirit which breathes in the universe is placed upon the throne of divinity, as is done by our modern pantheists—it is idolatry, it is heathenism. Heathenism consists in this, that the created is deified.* But Israel knew that there is God; not

* "The essence of heathenism consists not in polytheism, but its dark mystery is the deification of the creature. Whether the creature is viewed and worshipped in its totality, or whether one being of nature is made the object of religious service; whether the spirit who pervades all, and who becomes self-conscious in the human mind, is elevated to the throne of deity; or a material ob-

a god—God, the absolute, the One who in Himself is infinitely blessed, self-existent, eternal—who is His own place and His own time and His own cause—of whom and to whom are all things. And while they knew this God, who is, as it were, outside and beyond and above all that is in time and in space, they did not know Him as one that was afar off, but as a God of condescension, as a God who is present with us from day to day, as a God without whose will not even a sparrow can fall to the ground, as a God whose eyes try and watch the children of men. Where but in Scripture do we find such an idea, so sublime, majestic, and holy, and yet so full of love—so simple, homely, and sweet?

While Israel knew this God, they necessarily knew also what sin was. Abraham had no law, and yet he knew what it was to follow God, because the character of God, the presence of God, the very idea of God, is a bright light

ject is adored as symbol of the nature-power—a shapeless block, a white elephant, a beetle of the Nile mud, a spear of the warrior—these are mere differences in culture and mental tendencies; the sin of idolatry remains the same."—THIERSCH, "Kirche im Alterthum," p. 5.

which reveals to us the dark spots and stains which defile our soul. Hence, without the ten commandments, and without law, Abraham walked before God, and was perfect. Where there is the knowledge of God, there is the knowledge of the obedience, love, and purity which God requires. Unto His people Israel God gave His law, to reveal sin more clearly. In His wonderful condescension He took notice of all the different sinful tendencies of man, and He made a hedge round His people, showing unto them in the law, as in a mirror, all that He requires of us, and all that men ought to be. The whole life of Israel was thus, as it were, taken possession of by the holy and merciful God. Into all the ramifications of his personal and of his social and of his national existence the will of God entered. The very way in which the land was to be sown, the very manner in which their garments were to be prepared, the very regulations which are given unto them about their time and about their food: everything showed that there was a will of God in which He was to be glorified. They knew what sin was, and therefore there are in

Israel those heartrending confessions of sin, of unworthiness, of transgression, of iniquity, which overwhelm the Israelite who is in the bright presence of Jehovah, and make him exclaim that he is undone—a man of uncleanness. As they knew the guilt and evil of sin; as they had been taught to know themselves in the light of God's holy and righteous love, and in the mirror of His perfect law; as they had felt the sorrow of repentance and the deep anguish of the contrite heart: so there was also revealed to them the redemption which cometh from above, and brings true peace and restoration. The heathen nations had a confused and distorted idea of sacrifice, and of methods of appeasing the offended deities and averting their judgments. But Israel knew redemption according to the idea of God, which was afterwards fully revealed in Christ Jesus. Not a compromise; not that God was to abate some part of His justice, and that man was to deny himself to some extent the indulgence of sin; but a real reconciliation, a true mediation, in which justice is satisfied, in which holiness is exalted, in which the law is vindicated, in

which God reveals Himself as the true and holy One, and in which the sinner receives not merely perfect peace, but a renovation, a renewal, a cleansing, in which he is actually brought nigh unto God, into communion with Him in light and in love.

When God reveals Himself, man sees not merely the character of God, the nature of sin, the merciful redemption by which God saves and restores the sinner, but in the light of the idea of God he understands also humanity and history. Not Herodotus, but Moses, is the father of history.* It is only by God that we are taught that the human race is a great family, and that it is guided by the wise and unerring hand of our Father; that there is a purpose of eternal wisdom and love, an ultimate point, a bright coast, towards which Omnipotent Goodness is steering us. Israel rose to the conception of humanity. They knew, as you have seen often in the books of the prophets and in the Psalms, that the Desire of all nations would come, that the Redeemer and

* Compare a very instructive chapter in Baumgarten's "Acts"—I. on chap. xvii.

Restorer of mankind would be sent, that Israel had a bright future before it, and that all the isles and all the nations afar off will receive the blessing of the Most High when He shall utterly abolish the idols, and make wars to cease upon the earth, and when all iniquity and abomination shall be subdued under the mild and yet righteous sceptre of the God-man, the King whom God hath anointed on His holy Mount Zion. How different from the Gentile nations. When their civilisation (as apart from the leaven and the salt of the grace of God it necessarily did) entered into the phase of moral decay and dissolution, they only sighed and lamented over the golden old times, and did not know that there was glory coming, when the Lord God shall hear the sigh of the prisoner, and shall send forth His salvation.

All this Israel knew—God, sin, redemption, restoration, history, and the future blessedness of the world; and all this they knew by grace, by the revelation which God in His sovereign mercy vouchsafed unto them.

How different is the Bible from any other

book—from any other history. The Bible never praises man. "*God* appeared unto Abraham:" "God spake unto Moses:" "God appeared unto Israel on Mount Sinai." "The word of the Lord came unto the prophets." Israel of and by itself knows nothing, and is nothing. All things are of God. And as it is all of God, so notice another distinction between Israel and the nations. You know the proud way in which the Greeks looked down upon barbarians. You know the haughty way in which the Romans regarded all the other nations of the earth as being created for them to subjugate. There is no such contrast in Scripture between Israel and the nations. On the contrary, Israel exists for the benefit of the world. "In thy seed shall *all the families of the earth* be blest." "Rejoice, O ye *nations*, with my people," saith God. This is the joy of the harp of David, this the jubilant rejoicing of all the prophets—that all ends of the earth shall be blest with the same light, and with the same strength and glory as the servant Israel whom God hath chosen.

Such was the light which God himself kindled. But Israel was never commanded to go forth

and spread this light. It was not to be aggressive. When Jonah was sent to the Ninevites, that was a mere exceptional case, very valuable and very precious, to keep the Israelites always in remembrance that they were chosen only for the benefit of others. But the Jews were not commanded to go forth among all nations. God intended them to be insulated. God had put a wall round about them to keep them separate; and even when our blessed Lord Jesus came, He never left Israel. He told His disciples not to go into the city of the Samaritans. Only occasionally, and when a special providence, so to say, relaxed the limitation, Jesus brought the gospel unto those that were not Israelites.

These exceptional cases are most interesting, not merely in themselves, but on account of the light which they shed on the world-wide character of the prophetic word.

There was the woman of Samaria—to begin with what is nearest Israel—to whom Jesus told more plainly than He ever announced it at Jerusalem—"I am the Messiah;" and so great was the Saviour's joy over this lost and

found sheep, in which He beheld a type of Samaria's conversion, that He required nothing else to refresh and to strengthen Him after His weary journey. With great gladness and wonder His eyes dwelt upon the fields that were white for harvest, seeing in them a picture of the ingathering of all the nations into the house of God. Next we read of the Roman centurion. Jesus marvelled at his faith, and said, "I have not found such faith—no, not in Israel." In the Gospel of John we are told of Greeks who came to the feast to worship; and when Jesus heard that they had expressed a desire to see Him, His soul was filled with joy and solemn anticipation, because He was yearning to be baptized with the fire of suffering in order that the corn of wheat may bring forth much fruit, that the times of the Gentiles might come. And that Syrophœnician woman, never to be forgotten as long as the Church lasts—that heroic woman, who overcame all difficulties and all obstacles, and proved herself to be a true daughter of Jacob, who wrestled with God and prevailed—with what deep marvel and ad-

miration did Jesus say unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith!"

Look at these exceptions as proving that the Jewish heart of Jesus, in harmony with all the prophets, was full of love to the Gentiles. See also Shem, represented by the woman of Samaria; Japhet, represented by the Roman centurion and by the Greeks; and Ham, represented by the Syrophœnician woman, all are to be brought into the fold of the great Shepherd, into the embrace of divine love. All these cases had been influenced more or less by Israel. The centurion had become a proselyte, and built the Israelites a synagogue; the Greeks had come to Jerusalem to worship; the woman of Samaria had retained not merely the five books of Moses, but also the knowledge that there was a Messiah coming who would reveal all truth; and the Syrophœnician woman, though belonging to a tribe which was peculiarly hostile to the chosen people of God, yet had learnt something from Israel, for she called Jesus the Son of David.

But after Jesus was risen, He then commanded His apostles to go forth into the whole

world, to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." I have often thought, when Jesus, the risen Saviour, gave that command unto His disciples, to go forth, not merely unto Israel, but unto all the heathen, where was that chosen apostle of the Gentiles who was to carry the gospel in all its fulness and liberty to the nations, and by whom the mystery of the Gentile dispensation, the mystery of the Church, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, was to be revealed and unfolded? Clearer than the eleven was *his* knowledge of the commission they received, even as he laboured more abundantly than they all. He was at that time still ignorant of the righteousness of God, sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, and most probably never spending a thought, save a thought of contempt, on Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified between two malefactors.

The messengers of Jesus went forth with the blessed gospel unto the heathen nations, declaring unto them the Messiah. What a task! When we think of heathenism — so powerful, ancient, vast, and deeply rooted—it must

appear to us as a huge mountain; and this mountain, by the simple preaching of the Word, is to be cast into the sea, so that the place thereof shall know it no more, and that for all coming ages it shall be buried in oblivion.

When we think of heathenism, we are overwhelmed and appalled. Think of its antiquity. Think of the thousands and thousands of years it has reigned upon the earth. Think of the extent of its territory. It once covered nearly the whole face of the globe, with the exception of that little Palestine. And remember what a large proportion of the earth is still inhabited by those who do not know the true and living God. Think of the wonderful minds which have been captivated and enslaved by heathenism. The Greeks are still our masters in logic, in rhetoric, in poetry, in architecture, in government. We have never yet exceeded the works of thought and art that have been handed down to us from those venerable ages. What a wonderful thing it is, that from the rudest and most savage tribes up to the most cultivated and gifted nations, there has been this fearful ignorance of God and of His truth. Think of

the evil of idolatry. Idolatry is not one evil; it is not a great evil; you cannot even call it the greatest evil. It is *the* evil; it is the mother of all evils; it is the root of all evil. As the first commandment is, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other gods beside me," and as this is the first petition, "Hallowed be Thy name;" so the knowledge and worship of God is the only source of everything that is grand and true, and noble and holy; and when men have departed from God, they have departed from the Fountain of living water. I know that our modern civilisation fancies that men can be good without God. This is a sign of the latter days. This is a sign that the chariot-wheels of judgment are coming near to us, that the mystery of ungodliness is developing with appalling rapidity. God is the Source of all light and love. The knowledge of God is the source of all truth, purity, and righteousness. They that make idols are like unto them. To sever morality from the root, the knowledge and fear of God—to assert the independence of the river of love

and mercy toward man from the Fountain-head, the love of God, is an indication of a deep estrangement from God, an enmity of the mind against the Lord, deification of self. The nearer we approach the end, the more universal and the more sublimated will heathenism become as *the* great anti-Christian enemy.*

And not merely is heathenism the mother of all evils, but think of the wretchedness and the misery of heathenism. It is a very superficial view of antiquity when people talk of the bright days of sunshine and joy in ancient Hellas. Yes, there was brightness and beauty. That people was gifted with a marvellous sense of the beautiful. There was within them a wonderful depth of thought; they were endowed with great powers of speech, of government, with great artistic feeling and skill. But those who are well acquainted with heathenism and antiquity know the deep-seated melancholy, the gloom, the cloud of darkness, which was only temporarily and superficially dispersed.

* It seems as if so-called Christian nations, heathen nations, and unbelieving Jews will yet unite against the Lord and His anointed.

Those among the heathen who were indeed noble and true were oppressed with the weight of the dark problems of life—with their ignorance of the mysterious, portentous future which was before them. The Apostle Paul, with that wisdom which God had given him, and by that marvellous insight by which he entered into everything, said that the heathens were *atheoi*—atheists, "without God, *and without hope.*" This is the best characteristic of heathenism—short and graphic; infinitely sad.

And therefore, as heathenism is so great an evil, and so sad an evil, ought we not to be anxious to send unto them the messengers of God's truth?

Yet this is not, after all, the highest ground. We think of men, and we pity them—and we cannot pity them too deeply; but when you think of heathenism, do you ever think of God—how it affects *Him?* When you see drunkenness, or any degrading vice, do you ever think of the pain God feels, the disgrace and dishonour it is to His name? When you think of heathenism, with its abominations, with its infanticide, with its cruelty, with its lust, with

its ignorance and misery, it is good, it is right, it is human, it is Christian, that you should compassionate them. But oh! what does God think of it? God, who created man in His image, and formed unto Himself a temple, that there He might be adored, worshipped, and loved—God, who honoured humanity so much that His own Son took upon Him our nature—what does God think when He sees human beings forgetting Him, and creating unto themselves gods?* What a description is given to us in the Word of God that He looks down on earth, where there is nothing but purity and blessedness and glory and love. He who is adored by myriads and myriads of angels, so intelligently, so lovingly, so unswervingly—that this God looks down from heaven, His dwelling-place, and all the iniquity and cruelty, and wickedness and abomination and filth of earth is beheld by Him. He says, "The wickedness of this great city Nineveh is come up before me." Only imagine it—

* Whether it be a four-footed beast, or the Hegelian philosophy, it remains all the same; it is man falling down and worshipping the work of his own skill.

those million beings that were in Nineveh, all their wretchedness, all their degradation in thought and feeling, in imagination, in word and work—millions and millions of sins—they all coalesce, they all meet, and they rise up like one dense, dark pillar of abomination from this earth straight to the very throne of God. "The sin of Nineveh has come up before me." And if of Nineveh, then of all China, and of all India, and of all the islands, and of all the nations where God is not known, and where His law is not honoured. What a dishonour to God! What grief, to speak after the manner of men, to our Father! Let us compassionate men, but let us be in sympathy with God. Let us pity wretched sinners, but do have some regard for the holiness and for the glory of Jehovah, who spared not His only-begotten Son, but gave Him up unto death, that His glory should fill all the earth, and that all nations should know that He is God, and that there is none beside Him, and that in Him there is an abounding love for every one that is needy, and an abounding power of forgiveness and life to cleanse and to vivify all who have

departed from Him. "Go forth and make disciples of all nations," because they are sunk in evil—because they are sunk in wretchedness—because God's name is dishonoured.

Difficult indeed is this task when we remember what we wish to do. I was greatly struck, in reading the life of that prince of missionaries, Henry Martyn, with the experience which he describes. When in England he read of Mohammedanism—when he studied the Koran—when he acquainted himself with the history of Islam, he thought that it would be an easy thing to refute their errors, to point out their absurdities, to uproot their superstitions. But when he went and met them face to face, he found that an erroneous system is not refuted in proportion to its erroneousness. There is no greater mistake than this—to imagine that, in proportion to its erroneousness or absurdity, will it be easy to convince people to give up a system and a method of life. No, it requires the power of the Holy Ghost—it requires the touch of the hand of God—it requires the attractive magnet of the love of Jesus to abolish idols, and to lead men unto the Lord.

Do we want to convince a Hindoo or a Chinaman, or any heathen, that the idols are nothing? Is that in itself a great object attained? Rather would I have a man to be possessed of some reverence, of some fear, of some superstitious awe, if you will, than be a fool like some of our Europeans, who say in their heart, "There is no God." What is it that we wish? Is it for the heathen nations to say, "Oh, we do not require these sacrifices which our fathers have offered; we do not need these ablutions and ceremonies." Rather would I see a heathen who does feel the need of sacrifices and ritual purifications, than one of those self-conceited, unbelieving Europeans who think that there can be remission of sin without shedding of blood, and that the transgression and iniquity of which men are guilty require no atonement and no expiation. Our desire is that men may come *to God.* We do not merely wish them to give up their idols, but to bow down before the living and true Lord. We want them not merely to be delivered from their superstitions, and from the sacrifices of their own invention, but to come with a contrite

and broken heart to the cross where Jesus died, the just for the unjust. This we aim at; this we pray for; this is the object of our labour; and *without the Holy Ghost it is impossible for us to succeed.*

Great is the work, and glorious! Pray, therefore, that God himself may bless and strengthen those who have gone forth. Is there any one here who does not take an interest in missions to the heathen? You pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and does this great mission of the Church not possess your heart's affection? Has not our blessed Saviour given us this commandment, so clear, so explicit, so unmistakable? Nay, how can any one think that Jesus is with him, or that Jesus is with the Church, who does not obey His commandment—"Go and make disciples of all nations." It is in this connection that the promise is given—"I will be with you always, even unto the end of the age." We cannot separate the precept from the promise. We dare not neglect the command,

and rest in the comfort and assurance of the Saviour's presence.

But the mission is not merely Christ's commandment; it is Christ's Presence. Jesus speaks of Himself to the Jews as the good Shepherd, and then He adds, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold;" other sheep, not Jews. Others *I have.* They are my property, they belong to me; they are scattered among all the nations of the earth. Yonder one is bowing down before a hideous image. In some other village another is tormenting himself, lacerating his body, thinking thereby to please an offended deity. Afar off, on some mountain height, there are others living perfectly careless and wild, as if every spark of human reason and feeling had been extinguished within them; they are mine. "Other sheep I have." God the Father has given them unto Him from all eternity; and when He died upon the cross, He thought of them also. They are the Saviour's, scattered, perishing.

Them also I *must* bring. Oh blessed necessity! It is the Father's will, it is the love of the good Shepherd, who died for the lost, which

make it necessary that the other sheep should be brought. The necessity is founded in the eternal counsel of God. But when I hear the Saviour's voice saying, "Them also must I bring," I can only think of His boundless compassion, of His love, dying on the cross, and of the yearning of His glorified humanity for the sheep who are perishing.

But how can He bring them, seeing that He is seated now at the right hand of the Father? The missionaries whom we are constantly remembering in our prayers, and of whom we think specially this day, they are the feet of Jesus, with which He has gone to China; and their lips are the lips of Jesus, with which He speaks unto the idolaters; and when they rejoice over one poor sheep that has come out of darkness and ignorance and sin and heathenism to worship God, it is the heart of Jesus that rejoices. It is through them that Jesus brings the sheep; it is He who gathers and saves them. "They shall hear *my* voice."

See here the real presence of Jesus upon earth. Let us know and value, with rejoicing gratitude, the reality of the great and central promise

given to the Church. When we, as the mouth and hands and feet and heart of Jesus, as His representatives, as His body filled with His Spirit, go forth speaking His truth, manifesting His character, feeding His poor, comforting His afflicted ones—we have, nay, we *are*, the real presence of the Lord; He who is with us is in us, and works by us. Thus in the mission to the heathen you behold Jesus fulfilling His word —"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice." It is the work and presence of our beloved Saviour that is brought before us in the mission work. Oh, how solemn, and yet at the same time how delightful and encouraging!

I ask you, then, who are Christians, whether you are in sympathy with the Father, who has said, "As I live, saith the Lord, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory;" whether you are in sympathy with Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, and who died upon the cross, not merely for Israel, but for the other sheep who are scattered abroad among all nations; whether you are in sympathy with the Holy Ghost, who goes forth,

sent by the Father and His Son, to convince men of their need of God, and to bring them unto the feet of that Saviour who can give rest unto all that are weary and are heavy laden; whether you are in sympathy with Abraham and the prophets, who rejoiced to see the day when the heathen nations should glorify God; whether you are in sympathy with the apostles who went forth, and who did not count their lives dear, but planted the standard of the cross wherever they were sent in the providence of God. Oh! then, your hearts, your prayers, your contributions, must be given unto this great work of the mission! . . .

It is surely not in a spirit of pride, not in a spirit of haughtiness, that we think of the heathen, rather in a spirit of humility and self-accusation. How great is our responsibility, for much has been given to us! How great is our sin, our apathy, our selfishness! How many instances among the heathen of conscientiousness and zeal, of faithfulness and love, cherishing very scanty elements of knowledge, put us to shame. It is not in the Pharisaic spirit that we think of heathenism. Are we free from ido-

latry? When our blessed Saviour says to us that we are not to be like the Gentiles—that we are to be free of care and anxiety—that we are not to be worldly but heavenly minded—that we are not to lay up for ourselves treasure on earth; and when the Apostle Paul teaches us, "Covetousness is idolatry,"—who among us can say, "I have kept the first commandment: I have kept myself free from idolatry. I do believe that there is only one God, the Lord, who has redeemed me, in whom alone I trust, and whom I love above all things, and whom I serve with all my strength?" No, dear friends, if it were not for the cleansing blood of Jesus, the sin of idolatry would crush every one of us. But if there is any one here who has not yet given his heart to Jesus Christ, oh! let me ask him, Do you not think that the heathen nations will rise up in judgment against you? Those who have never heard the truths of salvation, and those who, feeling the burden and weight of sin, are undergoing much suffering and pain, and making great sacrifices of money and of comfort in order to appease the gods — do you not think that they will stand up against

you who are so untroubled and unconcerned about your sins, and about the way of access unto God? Look unto Jesus Christ, the Image of the invisible God. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Turn from idols—from the love of self, from the love of sin, from the love of the world—turn from idols to serve the living and the true God, and to wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven.

And now I beseech you to unite in prayer for this great work. Read the reports which are sent by our missionaries, that you may know their difficulties—that you may rejoice with them whenever God blesses them; and if your heart is interested, then I have no doubt that it will be unto you, not a sacrifice, but a joy, an offering unto the Lord, an expression of praise, when in any way you help this great labour of love.

X.

THE REAL PRESENCE.

SERMON X.

THE REAL PRESENCE.

"And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."—MATT. xxviii. 20.

JESUS is omnipresent as well as omnipotent. He, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, is with His disciples among all nations, and all the days even unto the end of the age, when He shall come again to receive them unto Himself. The Lamb who was slain is in the midst of the throne, the centre and Lord of all: the government is upon the shoulders of the Child that was born, the Son that was given us (Isa. ix. 6). From the heavenly Sanctuary our royal High Priest sends down the Holy Ghost, and all spiritual influences and blessings; He commands all angels to go forth to minister unto His brethren, the heirs of salvation; He controls and guides

all events and movements of history, in order that the number of His elect may be accomplished, the creature itself in mysterious sympathy waiting for His return; while the powers of darkness and evil are already judged, and the gates of hell not able to prevail against the little sheepfold founded on the invisible Rock, and surrounded by the Lord himself as with a wall of fire.

Jesus is omnipotent, and therefore omnipresent. He is Lord of space and time. All ages belong to Him who is the everlasting Father, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. As He is eternal, so He is with us from day to day; and as He hath ascended far above the heavens, so He filleth all things.*

Do you recognise the voice of Jehovah in these words, "Lo, I am with you always?"

* "Although Christ in His body has ascended above all heavens, we must not forget that, consistent with His omnipresence, there are various kinds of presence which belong to His human nature, viewed either in itself, or in relation to His person. In the former aspect He is at present in a certain locality (though above time and space), yet in a local limitation, as is the case with the transfigured saints. In the other aspect, Christ, by virtue of the union of the two natures in one Person, and by virtue of the communicated glory and majesty, is present to all creation no less than the Logos."—ŒTINGER, "Idea Vitæ."

Is not this He who said unto Moses, "My presence shall go with thee?" the Angel of the Covenant who led Israel through the wilderness, the Rock that followed them? Is not this He who said unto Joshua, "I will be with thee," and who so often comforted His afflicted people by saying, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee?" When in the fulness of time the Lord visited and redeemed His people, the Evangelist Matthew reminds us that the name of the Virgin-born Child is Immanuel—God with us. What commenced with His birth is perfectly fulfilled in His ascension. It is the risen Saviour who now as our Head and Representative announces to us His name, "Lo, I am with you alway."

The name is awful, for it reveals to us that in Christ dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily; it is full of peace and consolation, for it assures us of His love and grace, which can never leave or forsake us.

Jesus is with us. Let us not weaken the meaning of this assurance. The incarnate Son of God, who is at the right hand of the Father,

is our constant Guide and Companion. As truly as He saw His martyr Stephen, and rose from His throne to succour and receive him; so truly do His human eyes rest now upon each of His disciples; so truly is He present wherever two or three are gathered in His name; so truly does He enter with the assurance of His peace into every heart that loves Him. Jesus is with us, for the Holy Ghost has not come *to supply Christ's absence, but to accomplish His presence.* And as Jesus is God and man, so with human sympathy and tenderness is the Lord of glory with us.

This Presence is mysterious; for the world seeth Him no more, yet we see Him. It is spiritual, because the Spirit brings the presence of the Lord unto our souls. But is it therefore not most real?

"I am with you." Here is our guidance. "Follow me" is the sum and substance of all commandments. Christ has not merely given us words and precepts, but He is the Lord our God, "which teacheth us to profit, which leadeth thee by the way which thou shouldst go" (Isa. xlviii.)

"I am with you." Here is our safety. If He be with us, who can be against us? Here is our strength. Leaning on Christ, our difficulties vanish. "Have not I commanded thee," said God unto Joshua; "be strong, and be of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou discouraged, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Jesus is with us, this is our joy. "How can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the Bridegroom is with them?" We hear His voice, the words of eternal life—the promises, which are yea and amen in Him—the commandments, which are so many channels of communion and bonds of peace, and we rejoice. Our eyes see the King in His beauty and the land that is afar off—His glorious divinity, His perfect humanity, above all His dying love, and we rejoice. When we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, in affliction, in bereavement, in spiritual loneliness and darkness, even there He is with us, His rod and His staff comfort us; when we cannot see Him—

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills the breast."

The presence of Jesus is the secret of the believer's life. As Enoch walked with God, so all disciples walk in the light of God's countenance, even with Christ. The Saviour sustains the inner life. He is ever giving them His peace. And from His presence are all sanctifying influences, and that faith which overcometh the world.

Jesus is with us in the days of prosperity and joy. God sends sunshine as well as rain; God, who afflicts and chastises, giveth us also all things richly to enjoy. He who wept at the grave of Lazarus was a guest at the marriage of Cana. He who foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple gazed with delight on the lilies of the field, watched the merry, light-hearted birds, and the innocent games of children in the market-place. The Lord, who was oppressed with the thought of men's unbelief and ruin, rejoiced in Spirit over the babes who believed in Him. Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but never did man rejoice in all that the Father hath given us to rejoice in as the Lord. He delighted with thanksgiving in nature and friend-

ship and the blessedness of work. Remember, then, the presence of Jesus in your prosperity, and in the circle of blessings and enjoyments in which you live. Where Jesus cannot be your companion and your confidant, you ought not to be. Never leave Immanuel.

Jesus is with us in our affliction. His is more than divine compassion; His is brotherly, human sympathy. He remembers His earthly experience; He understands the tears and fears of human hearts. While we are suffering below, Jesus is upholding us by His priestly intercession: high above, where sin and sorrow cannot enter, lives our God and Brother. But He is also with us, sustaining us with the assurance of His grace — watching over us, that the branch may be truly pruned to bring forth more fruit—guiding us, while our thoughts are overwhelmed within us, and we know not our way. This is He who was seen in the fiery furnace as the fourth man; and as the three believers came forth out of the raging flames unhurt and unsinged, their very garments uninjured by the hostile element, thus shall the whole multitude of believers come out of the

great tribulation, so young, strong, beautiful, and joyous, as peaceful and fresh as little children, and yet bearing — what angels might covet—a resemblance to Him, whose followers they were in suffering.

Jesus is with us when the soul feels deserted. When our soul is cast down and disquieted within us, when the waves threaten and the wind is boisterous, when the Master appears to us to have forgotten us, and to lie asleep, not caring whether we perish — "O ye of little faith!" Jesus is Immanuel—lo! open the eyes of your hearts and look—He is with us.

When we are slow of heart, and cannot believe that He is risen, and walk in sadness, Jesus is with us. No road so narrow but there is room for Jesus to join you; no sorrow too heart-deep but He can say, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Jesus is with us when, like Thomas, we say in obstinate moroseness—"Unless—I will not believe." Jesus is with us when, like Peter, we deny Him. Oh, how quickly and tenderly will He look, and with His eye guide us into repentance (Ps. xxxii.) Jesus is with us, though He listen not to thrice-repeated suppli-

cation to remove the thorn in the flesh. He is with us, and will say at last, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Jesus is with us when we think we are cast out from His presence, in the utmost corner of the land, and in the darkest hour of the night. O blessed Presence! from which we cannot flee. "Though we make our bed in hell, or ascend into heaven—though we take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall God's hand"—that is, Christ —"lead me, and Thy right hand"—that is, Christ—"shall hold me" in perfect safety (Ps. cxxxix.) He is Immanuel.

The Lord's Supper is the expression of the real presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

We receive in the broken bread and in the cup of the New Testament the special signs and seals of the covenant of grace; nay, more, a very special, present renewal of Christ's union with us.

Let us consider now the words of our Lord in their bearing on the history of the whole Church.

You who believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, believe also that there is the Holy Catholic Church, and you rejoice in the communion of saints. As creation is the Father's work by the eternal Word and the energy of the Holy Ghost—as redemption is the work of the Son according to the will of the Father, and in the fulness of the unction of the Spirit; so the Church is born of the Spirit, by whom the Father gives unto Jesus disciples, and who gathers and builds up the saints unto life and glory everlasting.

We rejoice in knowing that we belong to a vast and united community, that we are branches of the Vine, and members of the household of God. For our hearts are enlarged and strengthened by sympathy; we suffer with greater patience, we fight with more sustained courage, when we remember that we belong to a numerous, glorious, and victorious army—that our prayers, our sorrows, and our conflicts are shared by an innumerable multitude, even as

our final glory will be in communion with all the elect of the Father. To belong to an illustrious nation, and to fight under a great and wise leader, is a thought animating and encouraging; how much greater and nobler is the knowledge that we belong to the Church of Christ, the Son of God, that we are members of the body of which He is Head!

True, at any given period of history the Christians seem a little flock. But the very same chapter which begins with the complaint, "Who hath believed our report?" concludes with the declaration that Christ shall see His seed, that many and the strong shall be subdued and saved by His love. When they shall be gathered together from the north and south, the east and west—when all the redeemed who have heard and received the example of peace shall meet in the Father's house, who shall be able to number the multitude of saints, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands, beautified with the Lord Jesus, their righteousness and glory?

When Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the world," He was looking forward to the future, to the Church

which He was about to build on the rock of His divine Sonship. But Jesus was the Redeemer of God's people from the beginning. He who said, "Lo, I am with you," had uttered the significant and majestic word, "Before Abraham was, I am." The Church, strictly speaking, began on Pentecost; but the congregation of saints commenced with the first gospel, declared by Jehovah himself in Paradise after man's fall. He who was the Lamb of God, slain from before the foundation of the world, was the Saviour, the light and strength of all the chosen race throughout the ages before His advent.

In all these centuries God the Lord was the dwelling-place of His people. They were persecuted and called to suffering, from righteous Abel, the first type of the martyr-shepherd, to Zechariah, whose blood was shed in the temple. But God always preserved a people on earth. After the death of Abel God raised up Seth; the golden thread of believers and confessors was ever continued by the omnipotent mercy of God. Egypt had well-nigh destroyed Israel; their enemies had well-nigh swallowed them up

quick when their wrath was kindled against them; but I AM was with His people, He was on their side. He delivered them out of the house of bondage; He divided the Red Sea; He led them through the wilderness, and brought them into the land which, according to His eternal counsel, He had promised and prepared for them. All the days of sunshine and tempest, of danger and of evil, He is with them, and they are safe.

But more dangerous and formidable than the enemy from without is the enemy which arises within the congregation—her own languor and unfaithfulness. The enmity of Pharaoh was cruel and powerful; but the worldliness, the idolatry, the ingratitude and sin which crept into Israel, were far more insidious and deadly. Well might Elijah exclaim in despondency and sadness, "I, even I only, am left." Yet the divine answer was that Jehovah was always with His people, that He had in His sovereign grace reserved seven thousand for Himself who have not bowed their knee before Baal.

From Seth to Abraham, from the cruel and dark days of Egypt to David, from David to

the captivity of Babylon, at all times and all the days, He was with His people. And when the tabernacle of David was very low, then the angel appeared unto Mary, and said unto her, and in her to the daughter of Zion, "The Lord is with thee." Blessed are the people of God, even in their lowliest condition; for God has chosen to dwell among them, and the redemption draweth nigh to the poor and needy who wait on God. Jesus, who looks forward to the end of the present age, and His return in glory, looks also back to the past history of Israel, and to the centuries before Abraham, and His name is Immanuel—God with us. *He is* before Abraham was, and He is all the days, even for ever.

Jesus ascended into heaven, but He has thereby not left earth and His disciples here below. He who dwells in the high and lofty place dwells also with him who is of a contrite and broken heart. Taken away from judgment and humiliation, He delights now in glory to remember His sorrows and temptations on earth, and to sympathise with the saints, whom He is not ashamed to call brethren. All

limitations of space are now removed. When on earth He had to leave friends, because He had to go and preach the gospel to other cities. How pathetic was the appeal, "Come, ere my son die!" how trying the suspense of Mary and Martha when Jesus tarried, and came not to Bethany till after the beloved brother had died! But now Jesus is glorified; He is with us always. Wherever two or three are gathered in His name, His most real and blessed presence is with them; He is with every one who loves Him, and He is always with His disciple.

The Church has a twofold danger to encounter. As Jesus when on earth, so is the Church now the object of Satan's enmity; and his method is first cruelty, and secondly, cunning. He first sought through Herod to kill the infant Jesus. He then endeavoured, directly and indirectly (through the people, Christ's brethren, Christ's apostles), to tempt the Saviour to forsake the God-appointed path of humility and suffering. The violence of Satan was of no avail. God protected His holy child Jesus, and brought Him out of Egypt, even as Israel's history had

typified. The temptation of Satan was of no avail. Jesus in the Spirit of Sonship wielded the Sword, even the Word, and learned obedience through the things which He suffered.

The Church has to follow her Master's history and example. As Joseph was first persecuted by force and deadly cruelty, and afterwards tempted by the woman, emblem of the world; so the Church first was attacked by the sword, and afterwards by temptations and insidious compromises.

Thus the history of the Church in the world begins with suffering. Stephen is the first, the crown of martyrs, the noble army who died for the faith, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Jesus was with them. His banner over them was Love. His right hand sustained them. They beheld His glory, and they died with joy. And the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church. The congregation of the Lamb gained the victory by her meekness and suffering. The world was conquered by divine weakness. Stephen was stoned, Saul was converted. As the Church was hated and persecuted, believers became strong and fervent, and their

testimony was bright and attractive. "I AM" was with them; the burning bush was not consumed. The presence of Christ was the martyr's joy, and the vitality of the Church.

But after violence came temptation. Times of calmness and prosperity succeeded. The world accepted the gospel outwardly and superficially. Power, wealth, honour, and influence were given to the Church, and therewith came laxity of doctrine and of discipline, and that divided, lukewarm state of the heart which is so hateful to the loving and holy Saviour. Then came days of error and superstition—then came a flood of pagan thoughts, practices, and methods. They were indeed dark ages, when the gospel was not preached and the Scriptures not taught —when a false priesthood diverted the souls of men from the dignity and mercy of the great High Priest—when the simplicity which is in Christ was forsaken, and the complicated inventions of self-righteousness, will-worship, and false mediation substituted for God's simple and all-sufficient message of peace.

But Jesus was always with His people. There was always a remnant according to the

election of grace. There was always a testimony for God's truth; there was always a little flock who knew the Shepherd's voice, and who trusted in His perfect salvation.

Jesus was with the Church in the days of Luther, when He sent forth His word with power. The Reformation was not a new formation of Churches. The apostacy of Rome is a new formation, without divine authority. The Reformation, in its essence, was a return to apostolic times; it was a new manifestation of the presence of Jesus, the only Saviour, the only Lord. "I am with you." The Lord our Righteousness and Strength was the very centre and glory of the newly-awakened congregation.

And since the Reformation, has not the Lord been with His Church? How soon was the Reformation period succeeded by a period of formalism and lifeless orthodoxy, and in more recent times by doubt and rejection of God's truth. Sometimes it seemed as if the Church of Christ had vanished. The enemies of the Saviour triumphed. They brought Joseph's garment rent and stained; they attacked the Scripture, which testifies of Him, which is His

robe, the manifestation of His truth and love. As the soldiers and officers in that night when Jesus was betrayed — they came forth against the Scripture as against a thief, with swords and staves for to take it. They applied all the resources of erudition and ingenuity, all the weapons of criticism and human speculation, to attack the inspired record of divine revelation. They questioned its history, criticised its doctrine, rejected its miracles, charged it with discrepancies and errors, and refusing assent to its central truth—Christ crucified—deprived it of all unity and strength. And when the robe of Joseph was thus torn and stained, they thought that Joseph himself was dead, and that His name was only a sacred reminiscence and symbol of rational religion and humanity. But Jesus says, "Lo, I am with you alway." Tidings come, "Joseph is alive, and is exalted Lord of all." The Holy Ghost touched the heart, the light of truth penetrated the darkness—Christ crucified was revealed as the wisdom and the power of God. And amidst all unbelief and pride of intellect, the testimony of the Church is maintained: clearly and joy-

ously she confesses that Jesus is Lord, that Scripture is the word of God, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that without the new birth from above none can see the kingdom of God. Jesus is with us, a living, loving Saviour, and His Spirit is the unction which we have received, by which we discern and judge all spirits, be they ever so haughty and subtile.

Jesus will be with us all the days, even unto the end. For there is an end. There will be a consummation of the Church, a judgment of the world. The world is willingly ignorant of the end. They do not wish to think of it, and of this moral perversity is born ignorance, and then unbelief, and then opposition. But we are looking forward to the end—to the coming of Christ, to the judgment of God's enemies, and to the marriage of the Lamb. We expect perilous times, when seducers shall wax worse and worse, when many shall oppose themselves to the truth as it is in Jesus, when men shall become fully aware what is implied in the rejection of Christ, even the rejection of God, and shall deny both the Father and the Son. The conflict shall finally be one of awful sim-

plicity, for men shall oppose themselves to God. Then shall it be evident that to believe in the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, it is necessary to believe in His Son Jesus.

And among professing Christians the love of the many (the majority) shall wax cold, and many shall walk the enemies of the cross of Christ—not of the doctrine, but of the power and substance. But Jesus is with us to the end. Let us therefore be steadfast, strong, and of good courage. Only let our conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

Jesus is the end. He is Omega as well as Alpha. We wait for Him from heaven. When He appears, we also shall appear with Him in glory. Then shall we ever be with the Lord, as He now is with us. We shall have communion with Him in His glory and reign, if we are faithful to Him now in suffering and obedience. Thus is the Lord himself our Hope, our Future, even as He is our Present Life.

If Jesus is with us, then we can say, I shall not want.

1. If Jesus is with us, we have all things. His

presence is our all. He himself is our Life. All the activities of the Church are the manifestations of Christ; of Him is our fruit found. He is always with us; not merely in the breaking of bread, and least of all in the Lord's Supper, as a *substitute* for His presence, as if it were an exceptional and momentary visit and self-manifestation. He is the very Life of our life, always most truly, really with us.

If Jesus is with us, we have all. The lukewarm Laodicæan imagines that he is rich and increased with goods. He is not conscious of his poverty, nakedness, and blindness, because the presence of Jesus does not fill his heart with burning love. But if we know our poverty, and our need of wisdom, righteousness, peace, strength—behold Jesus is the "I AM." He gives Himself, and we possess all things.

2. If Jesus is with us, we can do all things. "Be not afraid," He said to Joshua, "have not I commanded thee?" Is He not our Lord and our Strength? Does He not fight all our battles? and is it not He who worketh in us mightily? This is the secret of sanctification. Not merely a remembered Jesus, not merely the

motive of gratitude or fear, but the present Jesus, "I am with you," is the strength of the Christian. In every temptation, in every duty, in every sorrow, lean upon the Lord, who is with thee, and His grace will be sufficient.

3. Jesus is with us. This is the secret of our influence. If Jesus is with us, sinners will draw near to hear Him into whose lips grace is poured. The presence of Jehovah in the midst of His people will awe and attract many. The presence of Jesus in our hearts and homes will manifest itself in our character and conduct, and Christ in us will draw many to Himself.

How even, continuous, steadfast, and harmonious ought our life to be! Like a peaceful river, which flows on with ever-increasing strength and beauty, gladdening and fertilising the land on either shore, until at last it ends in the boundless ocean of blessedness which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Jesus is with us all the days—that is, every day. There need be not a single day of gloom and doubt, of apathy and coldness, of sin and worldliness; there need be no day of mere existence, every day may be a day of life, of Christlife.

Do you remember that of the forty years which Israel dwelt in the wilderness we have only a record comprising the events of two years? Of the eight and thirty years we read nothing but dark and ominous allusions in the prophets; as of dreary and evil days of idolatry and unfaithfulness, when Israel was forgetful of the God who redeemed them, and sacrificed to Baal and Remphan. How sad and fearful a picture! And yet the Rock that followed them was Christ. He was with them all the days. His love and faithfulness, His power and wisdom guarded them continually. There need have been no days, no years of murmuring, self-consuming care, idolatry; there need have been no blank days, but all days might have been days of faith and prayer, of love and hope, of adoration and thanksgiving.

Let us rather follow the example of the Apostle Paul. From the day that Jesus in His infinite grace appeared to him, the apostle followed his Master. This one thing he did. He abode with Him who says to us all, "Lo, I am with you all the days." From the hour in which by grace he turned unto God in Jesus,

until the end, when he could say, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," he never turned back, he never grew weary. He passed through much sorrow and suffering—he had times of darkness, of fear, and of trembling —he had the sentence of death in himself, nay, he died daily; but Jesus was with him, his daily renewed resurrection-life and joy.

4. If Jesus is with us, then heaven itself is begun; for to be with the Lord is eternal life and blessedness. Jesus shall throughout all eternity be our all. We depend and lean on Him throughout the endless ages. He, who is our Light in this dark valley, is also the Light of the celestial city, the heavenly Jerusalem. He, who is the Lamb and the Shepherd, the Lord of poor believers on earth, is the King, who from the throne of His majesty fills His glorified saints with joy and strength from age to age, æons without end. Jesus is with us; we possess in His presence and love the foretaste and the substance of the future glory. Even now are we in heavenly places.

But if Jesus is not with us, we are lonely and desolate, though we be surrounded with friends,

and all that this world can give us. Even in this life the Christless soul is lonely; for Jesus is the only Saviour and Friend who brings true peace and love to the heart. But who can describe the loneliness of the Christless in death and in eternity! For to be without Christ is to be banished from the Source of all light and love, from the home of blessedness and concord, from the Father, and from the family of angels and saints, to be banished in that uttermost darkness whither no ray of light, of love, of consolation, of fellowship can penetrate—to be alone with a conscience wounded and which cannot be healed, with a mind darkened and pained by its darkness, with a heart thirsting in vain for that which only Infinite Love can supply, and is now yearning to supply to the heart of man!

Blessed be God, Jesus, who is with us, whose presence is our light, whose love is our joy, He in whose name we meet, and who speaketh by us, is the Shepherd of the lost, the Saviour of the guilty, the merciful and compassionate High Priest! "If any man thirst, let him come unto Jesus and drink." The Lord, the Son of

God, who loved sinners, and gave Himself for them, will in nowise cast him out, but receive him, and be his Saviour, his Friend, the Bridegroom of his soul. Jesus will be with him in time and in eternity; for He is with us until He comes again to receive us unto Himself, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Amen," responds the believing heart. Who first uttered this amen? Was it the Lord himself, the true and faithful Witness, the Amen, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen? Was it the Evangelist Matthew, who in the name of the whole Church responded to the Master's command and promise with the word of faith and loving assent? Let us all say Amen with joyful lips and adoring hearts; let us say Amen in our daily obedience, and in our daily testimony for Jesus and His gospel; let our true and sincere response be, "Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Amen.

THE END.

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